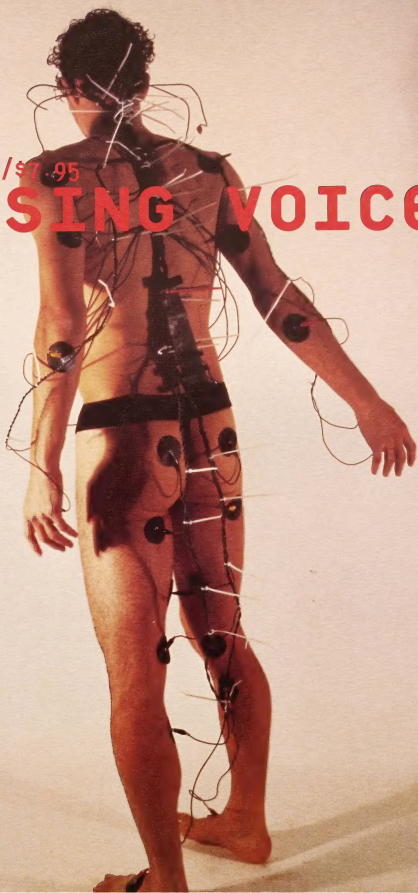


emigre#31/\$7.95

RAISING VOICES





The rays from the teachers light shine on to the fertilized student Lyndon Vancinti Age 13

PAUL HELLER AND BEN SHIELDS

Author Introduction by Ben Shields

Dear Helen,

This text is a response to the partisan and highly contentious debate that has emerged from the pages of *Zydeco* and *Enligna* magazines during recent months. We are referring specifically to the argument elaborated by Steven Heller in *Zydeco* no. 9 vol. 3 and his defense of the piece in *Enligna* no. 10. The latter was presented in direct juxtaposition to an interview with the target of Heller's vitriol, David Shields, who offered a similarly unconvincing substantiation in some important respects for his enterprise as a model for critically pertinent cultural production. It is significant that this debate has subsequently elicited the plethora of responses from the design community which seem to pull into sharp focus the matrix of methodological and conceptual difficulties inherent in the process of making visible graphic design in a post-industrial age (a notion we might reject which carries within its meaning structure the constant problematization of the criteria by which this activity is judged). If one takes the respective discourses of Heller and Shields as being essentially oppositional, then our intention with this piece is to extend the parameters of their dialogue in such a way as to suggest possible moments of convergence or the actual formation of a radically productive synthesis. We propose to do this by working around those statements made by both "commentators" that we consider to be particularly problematic.

In his conversation with *Enligna*, Heller states that the limitations of graphic design are determined purely by the marketplace. It is interesting that the legitimacy of such an ideologically heterogeneous and historically rich enterprise should be determined by a reduction to the hegemony of post-war corporate capitalism. As a declaration of critical pragmatism, this might be excusable if the world still revolved on the same axis. The brutal reality of the situation is that the current generation of graphic design students will ultimately emerge from their "household environments" only to discover that the "marketplace" no longer exists in the same way that it did a decade ago. Like the architect however, committed designers are highly likely to suppress their creative drives in the absence of that elusive contract or instant placement in some respected generalizing commercial practice. In this scenario it is our contention that designers will further come to articulate their environment according to a more retrospective observational process. It hardly seems inappropriate that this tendency towards a more subjective level of engagement (defining the boundaries of a brief that must also take into account the mechanisms of subjectivism) should be underpinned by a broad understanding of the many salient concepts to be found within the fields of psychoanalysis, philosophy and critical theory. From our own point of view it was somewhat ironic that Heller drew a line of demarcation between "theory" and "practice" when, following Bergson's notion of the *élan vital*, we have found the two to function inextricably. It seems to us that "theory" (it would be nice if more of its critics were able to make reference to specific texts) is important not as an "explanation" of design, but as an essential commentary on the hugely sophisticated context in which it operates. Ultimately theoretical texts exist as navigational devices that we employ not only in the process of traversing the cultural field, but also in the formulation of an understanding of our production within dominant epistemological systems, and to posit them as an irrelevancy must surely constitute a gerrymandered act of intellectual self-limitation.

Perhaps it is a symptom of his negation of the overly theoretical that leads Heller to dismiss *Output 2* as a minimalist triumph of style over content. It is adorably admirable that he is so resolutely "interested in politics," but as we know from the work of the Frankfurt School, politics has interests as well — and among these is aesthetics. The two concepts are hardly antonymous and it is surely clear to any critical cultural observer that every sign displays its own (often submerged) political economy. So to suggest that *Output 2* is in some way disengaged from the so-

cial and political purely because it fails to address visible issues seems to ignore the fact it carries within its form a political dimension that is of an altogether more psychological nature.

In this last respect and with a myriad of critical tools in hand, it seemed that David Shields missed an important opportunity in his discussion with *Enligna* to articulate his practice in a language that might properly inscribe his relationship to, as Henry Miller once wrote, the "fine dimensional world whose fundament is chaos," in a space between theory and experience. It seems to us that in terms of their method, the four designers responsible for *Output 2* were falling into the trap of simply reproducing as opposed to rigorously deconstructing (and subsequently revealing something about the stratagems of) a condition of a culture that is generally perceived to be problematic. We are suggesting by this that it is insufficient to arbitrarily parrot fragments of televised imagery and "printed ephemera" and then present the results as a credible attack on the assumed linearity of the "traditional" narrative. As we know from several hundred years of philosophical investigation, notions of linearity and teleology have been exposed to continual and professed questioning. Admittedly, to suggest that an enterprise that is to some degree localized in its aims and objectives must necessarily project a detailed ontological view is perhaps to unrealistically broaden the parameters of its brief. Nevertheless it is clearly essential that the activity reflect some consideration of its own historicity, and the importance of this was betrayed in Shields drawing a retrospective parallel between the formal aspects of *Output 2* and Futurism — a movement, which, as educators, we find it impossible to speak of without a graver recognition of Marinetti's close personal association with Il Duce. Beyond this ill-considered historical grafting "after the fact," it might be further construed from the Futurist analogy that Shields was in some way exposing his absolute subjugation to the speed of communication technology and, like a doomed animal mesmerized by twin electronic light beams on the "information superhighway" cannot hope to move outside of an impoverished space where mechanistic understanding constrains a practical impossibility.

As the perceived importance and stability of preexisting conceptual and formal structures seem to collapse inexorably into the myth of post-modernity and a new generation of designers attempts to express its mistrust of the older movements with their Utopian models and supposedly self-evident truths, the absolute need to acquire a more considered purchase on the terminal eclecticism of our time must take precedent. Steven Heller admirably underlined the importance of understanding and assimilating the models of design history, while Shields bravely attempted to articulate his relationship to a world in Brownian motion. In our own lives we attempt to creatively plot a course between the polarities of chaos and order in a state of suspended disbelief, where it is recognized that one term relies on the other for its self-definition. In this respect it is important, as we have already stated, that we do not ultimately reproduce and thereby contribute to the normalization of a condition fabricated around barely answered questions. We cannot reject the undeniably beguiling older design models for their lack of current applicability when we understand that all structures (with language itself standing as the apothecary hold within themselves the potential for radical transfiguration. In this sense, every contemporary mutation carries the weight of its own condition of being in the form of historical traces, and perhaps the "glitches" in which Steven Heller refers is the visual manifestation of a limited understanding of this process.

In conclusion we would say that between the contradictions in the arguments presented by Heller and Shields, there exists a plane on which a collection of more sophisticated, engaging and intellectually challenging models for graphic design might evolve. These models will be inscribed in a different kind of marketplace, will draw upon the disparate subjectivities of a host of practitioners and will (as Belloc might say) function co-extensively as "machine arrangements" effectively communicating the many things that now, more than ever, need to be said.

REAL TALK

David Taylor, School of Graphic Design

Barnesmore College of Design and Communication Arts, Eugene

DEAR EMIGRE,

I would like to respond to Steven Heller's critique of the "Ugly," published in the recent issue of *Emigre*. It is a shame that *Emigre* became yet another vehicle for Heller's personal commentary. The prevailing series of Heideggerisms — "sameness," "dyslexic Cliff Notes," "stylistic abuse," and "laux rhetoric" permeates his interview and provides little additional insight into the real debates at hand. His comments on the "Cult of the Ugly" and *Output* series have already appeared in *Eye* magazine (No. 10, vol. 3, 1993) and have been related in subsequent "Letters to the Editor" and on the pages of the *MAGA Journal*. Points have been established and defended. Isn't it time we move the conversation on?

To give Heller credit, he does highlight a series of potentially interesting questions. His reference to the *Output* 4 project between North Carolina State University, USA, and Barnsborough College of Design and Communication, UK, is a case in point. But, let's talk more about the real issues the *Output* series was attempting to foster — of how and what criteria should be applied to the criticism of work produced within an educational context and that arose in professional design practice, the appropriateness of adopting specific visual languages to specific communication problems, the role of the event-garde in the future of graphic design and design education, and so forth. Let's also do this with some semblance of "intellectual rigor," which asks each of us to move away from just looking at design from a "pragmatic" or even a purely "aesthetic" viewpoint and consider applying alternative methodologies that examine in greater depth the production, consumption and mediation process of graphic objects.

I am pleased that *Output* has, in its own way, sparked off some semblance of debate within publications such as yours. In many ways, though, *Emigre's* "Fallout" issue was a last opportunity to engage more successfully in a critical discourse between graphic designers, design journalists, educators and students.

DESIGN DESIGN

Los Angeles, California

DEAR EMIGRE,

The interviews in *Emigre* 30 (Fallout) caused me to reread Steven Heller's "Cult of the Ugly." I found it as frustrating as I did during my first reading. Steve raised many interesting subjects, then dropped them before I knew the point. I was greeted with a lead's sense of beauty — green and bumpy — but we happened on

to other subjects before I understood. Is beauty truly completely subjective? Or is Steve calling Cranbrook grads fools? I was told that much current design work is "aesthetically questionable," but not what is esthetically unquestionable...

Then on to the subject of ugliness, but our friend the lead and the questions he raises were unheard. Is ugly in the eye of the beholder? Is ugly purely cultural, an arbitrary category that changes from viewer to viewer? Or is there something universally true or important about "the golden mean...balance and harmony"? The only definition Steve gives for "ugly design" is "the layering of unharmonious graphic forms in a way that results in confusing messages." I doubt that incoherence is really Steve's definition of ugly, although I suspect it may contribute to the visceral (and maybe indefinable) sense of repulsion that does identify ugliness.

I share what I presume is Steve's visceral reaction to some of the work he mentions. "Confusing messages," in some sense of the phrase, may be at the heart of my revulsion. Certainly much "ugly" student work is part of normal youthful disrespect for the "adult" world. Saying "fuck you" to one's elders is a fine tradition and perhaps an integral part of finding one's own identity. There are many other good reasons to make a message offensive (visually or otherwise). But a considerable amount of graphic design seems to say "fuck you" without really meaning it. Is this merely faddishness, a desperate desire to stay "on the edge," or some sort of visual Taurine's Syndrome?

Although I don't think it defines "ugly," it is this confusion of messages that I find revolting in some of the Cranbrook/CalArts/Studio Dunbar mafia (and derivative) work I see. I don't believe that it is always desirable to be clear and certainly it's not always possible. It is, however, generally desirable to be honest. Form makes a claim, and designers are responsible for the claims their work makes.

I can often applaud the layering of disharmonious graphic forms in a way that results in confusing messages. It is the layering of graphic forms with no message beyond "it's hip to layer graphic forms" that I object to. Visually complex designs usually seems to make a claim to complexity of content. When I wade through densely layered design only to discover that there is less there than meets the eye, I have been defrauded. (Time and attention are the most valuable currencies of our Information Age. It will become more apparent over the next few years that taking someone's attention under false pretenses is no less a crime than taking someone's money under false pretenses.) Dismissing the implicit claims of the form of design reduces graphic design to mere page decoration. If a generation of decorators is the best replacement we have for a

generation of "visual jockeys," we haven't come very far.

Disillusion is, of course, not a Post Modern invention. Most of Modern graphic design strikes me as a specious argument at best. Instead of claiming nonexistent complexity, it makes unwarranted claims of clarity and/or functionality — the typographic equivalent of "functionalist" buildings with roofs that leak.

I guess this might argue against Rudy VanderLans' criticism of the blandness of the design of the popular graphic design press — bland design honestly reflects the generally bland content. On second thought, something more dispirited might be in order, since the tradition of graphic design journalism leans strongly toward a series of unchallenged declarations. "Dialog" when it exists, usually takes the form of silly pseudo debates on the level of 1990s TV's "Point Counterpoint."

The interviews in *Emigre* 30 took a more serious approach to design issues than we have grown to expect. Michael Bosley's interviews were intelligent and thoughtful, as befiting the people he interviewed. He had the respect for Steven Heller to challenge him rather than dismiss him. I didn't buy everything Steve said (nor do I accept everything Ed or Jeff said), but his views were better represented by being challenged specifically than they are when left on their own.

While Michael Rock worries *On A.D. Magazine*, May/June 1994) that the desire for newness might carry the demise of *Emigre*, the magazine seems to be reinventing itself in its desire for thoughtfulness. Keep up the good work. One possible roadblock to *Emigre's* raising the intellect of the design press is its Q&A and letters format. While it has worked well to personalize new design, there is a limit to the kind of thought that can be conveyed in that manner. It may be time for essays, articles, poems or whatever you to join the interviews and letters. I urge *Emigre* to continue to expand its horizons and prove Michael Rock wrong — I'm looking forward to Mr. Keady's essay "And they won't read this, either" in the *Emigre* 30 book.

JOE MILLER

San Francisco, California

DEAR EMIGRE,

Thank you for a thoughtful issue number 30.

What is it about a little experimentation that makes the Old Guard so nervous? Is Mr. Vignelli worried that Rodoni will be discontinued? Perhaps it's just the effect of greedy eyes being threatened.

It is interesting that so many are looking for some definitive direction in design. I feel that if design as an industry and culture developed a singular direction, we would be part of a boring field, indeed. It is the diversity of view-



points and handling of message that gives design vitality. Without diversity and exploration we could, and probably should, be replaced by software for marketing departments.

Mr. Heller's suggestion that a work is derivative if it is inspired by designs of recent years is difficult to accept when he seems to say that taking inspiration from some older set of masters is recommended. All design "derivatives" its meaning and symbolism from some source. Hopefully those sources are mere a part of our greater world than simply other designers.

So anyway, please keep smokin' the old farts around for us...but if Massimo does want to buy lunch...

CHICKEN LITTLE

Pointed on the Emigre Sublime Scale

I just finished reading the newest issue cover to cover and here are a few thoughts. First, I must admit, I am a bit tired of the "ugly" debate. Although in many ways I respect Steven Heller as a design critic, I think he is completely closing his eyes to a new phase in graphic design history. I believe that there will always be enough beautiful traditional design around for him not to worry. I would think that as such a respected critic (or historian if you will), he would be more open to the designers who challenge the traditional design limits.

Second, I was really impressed with David Shields' interview. He spoke about his work without any of the arrogance that Mr. Heller likes to believe that designers in his genre have. I also had the opportunity to meet David Shields last March when I went to Cranbrook for my interview, and was just as impressed with his straightforward sensibility about his work and his obvious enjoyment of his craft. He artsy-fartsy-fluffy-lazy-intellectuality. I, for one, love beautiful classical typography. I also love the combination of this classicism with digital technology. It's exciting, spontaneous, emotional, and aesthetic. And I'm afraid, Mr. Heller, here to stay.

BUT DUNNO

Biographical sketches

DEAR EMIGRE,

As a designer, and as someone who thinks about his design, I have been accused, at times, of overintellectualizing my work; however, I know that I would rather think about, study, and, hopefully, reveal, new knowledge in my visual communication than to simply second guess the I.O. of my audience and spoon-feed them. I find work of this ilk to be condescending, flattery, non-challenging and truly throw-away.

Mr. Heller's criticism of work such as Outpat seems too intuitive (I know this isn't an original statement). True, at times, this work may be conceived, macho flexing of intellectual and formal panache that graduate students are often prone to, but for the most part it is extremely intelligent, and, although a bit of a challenge to follow at times, it does communicate.

Admittedly, the line between condescension and conceit is pretty thin, but if in all other arenas involving creative processes (music, film, literature), intelligence is embraced, then why not design? Why not challenge rather than cater? This is not pompous to me. This is ideal and essential.

As far as the issue of style goes, I can see how it would seem that there is more work like this that is overly concerned with style. There may be. Maybe it's just easier to spot. However, I really can't see how, in the overall scheme of things, this is really different from any other design era. It isn't. Ideally, style should be what sets one designer apart from another and not the solution to the problem. Anne Bardick has already addressed this issue beautifully, as have so many others. This will always happen. There are Modernists who do it. There are Post-modernists who do it. And, there are Deconstructivists who do it. However, I believe that most of the work in question does not do it, nor do I believe Emigre is infallible (Emigre has shown some empty work in its history). It is so very easy to write all of this, admittedly very formal work, off as being nothing more than style. This is, it seems, what Heller is tempted to do and what he consistently does. This is a shame, too, because Heller is brilliant. He's just a little too subjective.

JAN ROGER MERTERY

New York City, New York

Pointed on Emigre Scale

Is nostalgia one of the pains we all end up suffering from? Does this explain both Mr. Heller's problem with about 99% of contemporary design and his simultaneous yearning for almost all things past? Is this why Mr. Rand can mostly list only dead designers (besides himself) as being worthy of any sort of praise? Do we all end up wishing for some kind of recapturing of our defining moments from our late twenties to our mid-thirties? I think a good example of this is the recent issue of "The Nation" on the death of Nixon, where all of these supposedly "people of the left" wrote these strangely nostalgic ads to Nixon as if they all felt this warm spot for the enemy of their early and mid-adulthood. Is all this evidence of the fact that in about ten years (I am now 34) I will cast the very moment of this controversy in design in a golden nostalgic light? Will I end up attacking

some future development (or moment) in design in ten years as being the downfall of Western Civilization and panic what is occurring now as being some kind of eternal standard? I hope not! And if I do...please, somebody step me.

GABRIE CHANCE

San Francisco, California

DEAR EMIGRE,

You are a feisty bunch. I just finished reading all of "Fallout." It was so exciting! I enjoyed the cast immensely. Michael Daely, very impressive, if he ever would want to change careers I would suggest Gun Sabe, he's so crafty. Poor Steven Heller scared most poorly, couldn't think without his editors, I suppose. Edward Fella, cool designer, "OutWest" is one of my favorite fonts; it is how I found Emigre. Mr. Keedy, I don't know his work very well but he can talk the talk, I like him. Gail Swanlund, she made me laugh. I agree with her take on women's "issues." I've been thinking the same for years, and I also think Kathy Acker is annoying, cheers. Oh and our poor Lisa Ashworth, please save my soul, no I think someone needs to rescue her from the wide eye, bambi camp she's trapped in. Hey it was fun, can't wait till next time.

WINE HIPPENHARD

Colorado Springs, Colorado

DEAR EMIGRE,

What a wonderful issue number 30 was. Even though I read it cover to cover, I will refrain from further application on the topics discussed. While I agree with most of what was written, the original Heller article has received far too much attention. When I read "Cult of the Ugly" for the first time, I could not help but feel sorry for the guy. Not only was the article poorly written, but his whole world appears to be precariously balanced on what he believes is "good." This latter notion was again illustrated in his profile of Gernot Hendersen/Edmund Guy in the March issue of Print. Guy's collages are sickly boring (even though I'm sure Gernot is a fine guy) and not deserving of such praises as: "the poster-strength graphic intensity and street-smart sensibility." No matter what your opinion on the collages are, Heller needs help. Let's not waste valuable time on a gossamer such as he.

Now, on to the real intention for writing this letter. My issue needs surgical help. That wonderful, delicious cover you people designed is marred by horrible dents and bends. What happened, did you have a D-Day rehearsal parade walk on it as it went to the post office? I'm sure it's not your fault, but I just got done



moving 1200 miles and didn't put so much as a scratch on any of my back issues. I was even hauling along a six foot hammerhead shark (photo enclosed) to boat. Please, even if you have to grease some palms at the old P.O., watch out for my next issue.

somehow marginalized into the faceless and nebulous void of "student design." Your interview with David Shoups cleared up many points raised in the *Eye* article as to our motivations and I would just like to add a few of my own reflections about the work.

The impression was also great, despite Kathy's constant attempts to explain otherwise, that the full force of the Cranbrook marketing machine was behind us. This was simply not the case. As was pointed out in her rebuttal letter in *Eye* and the footnote to David's interview in your magazine, Kathy supplied us with an extremely small and focused mailing list. Despite this, Mr. Heller continues to imply in his *Eye* interview that we mailed a copy to every member of the AIGA. (I sometimes wish we could have printed several thousand copies of the project. But, truth be told, the entire magazine was financed by Richard Bates' American Express card.)

A year or so after we buried Outpat I went to visit some friends in Texas. One night Dan Olsen, another Cranbrook graduate, and I were talking about things over a beer. He said, "I just didn't like that Outpat thing." The only response I could think of was, in retrospect, very dry, but sums up my feelings about this whole (lost) issue: "Me too," I said enthusiastically, and after a very long pause added, "You know how those group projects are..."

WE LETTER TO DAVID PAGE 2

Mr. Keedy's interview and subsequent letter raised many interesting points of discussion about design education that I feel need to be addressed. I was interested to read his statement about the perception/reality problem that we face in design education. The perception being that graduates of the "Heilhosers" (to borrow a phrase) are corrupting our students and forcing them to reject the history and tradition of our profession in favor of that ever popular and enigmatic subject: Theory. The reality is, as Mr. Keedy points out, that more often than not, we must redirect our students away from technology to make them consider their history and the culture they live in.

After leaving Cranbrook, I accepted a teaching position at a Polytechnic in a small town in New Zealand and our reality is that most of our students, despite our encouragement, value their computer skills far more than their conceptual skills. Educational institutions with students as their clients have been forced to recognize that computer skills have become a tangible and marketable commodity, while conceptual and methodological skills remain, by comparison, elusive, hard to define and therefore increasingly undervalued.

At a recent design conference hosted by my Polytechnic, we invited design programs from throughout New Zealand to present their schools' philosophies. Sadly, many of the presentations centered around the acquisition of new computer equipment, student-to-computer ratios and what software each school was running. Little time was spent on how students interact in the classroom or how curriculum could be tailored to reflect the country's unique and diverse culture.



SHARK DESIGN

Norwegian Fisheries School of Design
Oslo, Norway

SHARK DESIGN

I wanted to write to thank you and Mike Dooley for the excellent job that you have done following up Steven Heller's *Eye* magazine article "The Cult of the Ugly." I was one of the four designers involved with the production of Outpat '82 at Cranbrook. I had a great deal of trouble trying to justify writing a response to all of this; numerous letters have already been written to *Eye* and I'm sure that your magazine will also be flooded with commentary about the issue. I was, like Mr. Keedy, under the opinion that "the whole Heller/Ugly debate seems tired already." But to quote Mr. Heller, "There's a little part of me that feels as if I've got to defend what I've written and another part of me says, 'What's ultimately important is that I have the ability to communicate ideas and encourage debate.'" I was conflicted. Anyway, I decided to write.

When Mr. Heller's essay first appeared, I have to admit that I was both excited and greatly disappointed. I was delighted to see the work brought so prominently into the arena of criticism and at the same time extremely disturbed by the fact that, while other designers were specifically named to be held accountable for their "Ugly" work, we (and our project) were

A major point that has been overlooked by the commentary was why Outpat '82 looked the way it did. We were consciously (and perhaps naively, as Mr. Heller points out) responding to a precedent. The precedent, however, was not Modernism, the history of Cranbrook design, Paul Rand, Ed Fella or Art Chantry, but Outpat '81, a beautifully crafted and printed publication produced at Herron School of Art in Indianapolis, which eventually wound up winning a place in several prestigious shows, including the American Center for Design 100 Show. We went out of our way to produce a work that was stylistically in opposition to the original. Outpat '82, with its plastic bag, multi-colored sticky dots and gold ink is ugly when compared to its predecessor, and, needless to say, didn't end up on the walls of the ACD 100 Show the next year.

Just in case Mr. Heller missed the point, narcissism played a large and dominant role in our design process. The project features a series of "documentary" Polaroids of us pasting the magazine together. These were included in a somewhat veiled attempt to reflect our design process. In addition, many of the make-readies that we printed or wore castoffs from previous Cranbrook jobs. This was primarily a matter of convenience, but it could also be seen as another example of our self-indulgence. If those aren't honest manifestations of "faux-rhetoric, nothingness and conceit" then I don't know what are.





As the day progressed a curious trend began to develop: after first listing off nearly the entire inventory of their school's computer labs, the student presenters would then insist that the computer was simply another tool in their educational process. It struck many of us that that particular maxim might very well have run its course.

In New Zealand technology has become a pragmatic tool used to recruit student/clients. Most students entering the design education system today are media savvy, computer-literate, and far more discerning and demanding about the technology in their classrooms than in the past. To attract client/students, schools must profile themselves as being on the leading edge of technology. My one particular institution integrated the word Computer into the title of its degree program in an attempt to differentiate (market) itself from others in the country. Does this constant attempt to use technology to attract students and to stay ahead of rival institutions build up unrealistic expectations for both students and the profession at large?

Is the computer really just another tool, or has it become an end in itself?

I will be the first to acknowledge that the design education system in New Zealand is very different and, in some ways, more parochial than that of the U.S. I believe, however, that issues like technology, regionalism and culture are more interesting and pertinent to the design community than empty debates about style. I applaud Emigre's past efforts to bring diverse voices to design's mainstream (the recent "Broadcast" and "Nick Bell" issues stand out very clearly), and I'm sure that you will continue to do so. Thank you and Mike Dauley (again) for the interview work in issue #3.

P.S. By the way, that "Blackout" design in "Broadcast" (the design of the book) is by the book!

B. The French Designer of Design (as was designed by G. S. Anderson Design in Minneapolis).

GRAM STUBBS AND GARY JONES

Artistic Director

Dear Emigre,

Issue 30 has stimulated us to put toner to paper and send it across the Pacific. Not to say that other issues haven't; it just seemed to be the most appropriate time to put a couple of things into the public arena.

What turned out to be the final stick was Gail's and Rudy's response to Lisa Ashworth's letter. The issue was one insufficiently addressed in "Broadcast" (Emigre all, why has there been [and still is] a perception of a lack of "great" female designers?

The concern is not how many, but why there haven't been many. Perhaps the graphic arts haven't been sufficiently self-critical to address the problematic. You need to begin to

question the socio-political power systems of your profession. Promotion will not change the power relations. Ensuring your own success by playing the system will only further ensure that a minority of female designers receive the acknowledgements and recognition they deserve. Female presence in high-powered positions is not enough if they are not prepared to address issues pertinent to their profession. Whether you like it or not, gender is an issue. As a female artist, I'm shocked, bemused and disheartened by the complacency and complicity of individuals within a profession who still try to support prejudiced arguments. "...there really haven't been that many 'Grand Dames' of design! In fact I can count them all on one hand..." (Gail) Women can also be supporters of patriarchy!

Given that the graphic arts continue to be influenced by the visual arts (often using terms such as "Deconstruction" and "Post Structuralism"), maybe you should read some of the critical analysis and discourses that circulate "in and around" visual arts practice. Indeed, there has also been an attempt in the visual arts to overlook some of the socio-political issues relating to the role of female artists. However, this has been from mainstream forces, who have co-opted or reinscribed the term "feminism" for their own purposes, whilst the more innovative and aware artists are still directly involved in questions of gender. We suggest you read Griselda Pollock's *Vision and Difference* for a start and then take a closer look at the concerns of the Guerrilla Girls and other visual arts activist groups. This is not to say that there is not a hell of a job ahead; however, the problems must be concisely articulated before you can begin. Having a public space that promotes innovative and articulate design and discussion presupposes a good awareness of cultural politics or has the "post" been cropped from "Modernism"?

Rudy, if 9 out of 10 letters you receive are from males (Gail), then perhaps you should ask yourself the question, "Am I constructing my own audience?" Or "Am I doing enough to address power relationships in the graphic design profession?"

We would be concerned if the viewers of our work were disproportionately female or male. Your figures don't add up; what they do do, however, is highlight discrepancies and problems associated with your profession. We obviously have not come far enough, and gender is still an issue if there is a need to solely focus an issue on women in graphic design.

We hope you will publish this letter in its entirety and continue to open up debates concerning socio-politics and the design profession (visual artists also design). Keep pushing!

G. S. ANDERSON

Graphic Designer for Seattle's Callisto

Dear Emigre,

Hey! I thought the Stanley Cup was contentious, what with Canadians chanting "Oga's" and all, but, WOW! I got the 1st at about 1 p.m., finished at about 3:15 when I realized I was cracking a smile in relief as I perused the Baldwin/Da page. I was unconsciously folding, squeezing and fondling my Emigre with a tension that I've seldom experienced when reading a professional journal (or whatever this is - it's - it's a white hot tension machine!!) IMPRESSIONS/REACTIONS/REFLECTIONS.

Ms. VanderLande: Heller may say that you don't "edit" enough - he can shut up about that now. You have somehow developed the knack for, you could say, intestinal fortitude or, perhaps, balls of publishing just the right kind of "Watch me hang myself, I don't give a fuck" interviews that keep people lining up to be in the pages of your magazine. Congratulations on staying out of the bland and straying ever further into the truth - however your subjects may define it! May your tape recorder never choke. Who set the type in the letters section? Brilliant, expressive and exciting.

Ms. Licka: Thank you for this type (Matrix Script), it is simply wonderful. I look forward to the Whirligigs. Please write something about their initial conception.

FRANCE PAPER: I love it. It is expensive but I love it anyway. How did this snuff get in here? I want to be bored by the story of the paper supply. PLEASE! Perhaps one of your able editorial staff could do a bit of rearguard concerning this aspect of the book?

LISA ASHWORTH: Hello! Here is just a smidge of the rant I started - A client will not hire you on a quota basis. However, the gov't will give you a break for being a female-owned business.

As far as the design business goes, I think that sucks. Perhaps a relevant point lies somewhere in the realm of secretaries being forced into desktop publishing to displace designers - whatever contingent or planet they're from. Desire and talent will get to the table, but the table seems to shrink! This scares me much more than the fact that Mr. Vanderlande/Ms. Licka (my god! a husband and wife team!) make arbitrary choices about who they publish in a little book they happen to own. Does the word "boyraut" come to mind? Emigre is not the Fire Department. Also, to further belabor the point, what about lesbians? I am deeply offended by your characterization of Emigre issues "as and 'as being 'fair representation' when you fail to include lesbians, blacks, Haitians, Croats, stars or any group in your undefined blanket idea of fairness. To be succinct, you will always be tainted about this because it is not an issue. We work for money. We want talented creative individuals in all aspects of our life.



Matt, etc.



Prejudice sucks — fight back, don't talk about being fair.

Mr. Swanklow: Yikes! You seem so pleasant in person. I never expected pastel colors! Thank you all for a wonderful afternoon. Now I must begin to pack.

WALTER VESSELY

Los Angeles, California

DEAR DAVID,

I am amused at the gymnastics the design community is performing as it attempts to write its own definition. We, as designers, are eager to expand and embrace multimedia and animation, but contract into apologetics if we get too close to "Art." Why?

Whose honor are we protecting by denying the natural, frequent and essential crossover? Art or design? I wonder if we fear inadequacy in judging quality and value once the line is crossed.

Even my dear friend David Shields explains that "design is not art because designers design for the community, for everybody, for the public, for whomever — for an audience." Fashion designers, street musicians, architects, graffiti painters, Michelangelo the Sistine Chapel painter, and television producers all do their work "for whomever," and I delicately classify all these as artists. Mr. Shields may or may not agree that these are artists, but my view is that the "applied" arts are the most important because it is their job to integrate feeling into human life. (Mayen poetry is rarely art, and as far as I know, it was used in everyday life rather than an art gallery!) Just because something is functional doesn't mean it isn't art!

What do you think? I would love to hear opinions on this issue. *Emigre* is an incredibly stimulating and exciting forum. Thank you for your efforts to make it great — you've been tremendously successful!

We are all working within a visual realm and shaking out the art from the non-art seems like an empty gesture. I've been reading Seymour Chwast's biography of Jean Genet, and in it he quotes Jean Cocteau: "Fashion must be beautiful first and ugly afterwards. Art must be ugly first, then beautiful afterwards."

An intriguing thought, given our context. With this definition in mind, and all the preceding debate, it should be easy to choose up sides and continue working.

RYAN PLATTS

Port Huron, Indiana

DEAR DAVID,

I am a high school student in Indiana, and as much I hate to admit it, I never would have come into the field of graphic design but through the Macintosh. I'm lucky enough to have the basic tools at my disposal, but have quickly learned that I'll be a no-no designer unless I allow myself to think visually, then use the computer to extend my ideas rather than define them. I discovered *Emigre* about a year ago, and I deeply appreciate your innovative attitude and innovative graphics —

they're both a tremendous boost to me as a designer.

I appreciate your recent discussions concerning "old" and "new" design — David Carson vs. Paul Rand, etc. I read *Design, Form, and Chaos*, and I really appreciate Rand's work. I checked out *Graphic Design 22*, and clearly those fellows know their profession well. The work in both books, however, was missing the creativity, change, and resulting visual interest that are the rule at *Emigre*. The recent confrontations between the sides help free the rest of us to use our imaginations, rather than directly imitate work from one camp — which is a trap that is very easily fallen into.

Nobody asked, but... The Outpat 's team at Cranbrook reportedly was at a consensus that graphic design was not art. I disagree, Oh, do I disagree. David Shields stated, "Design is not art because designers design for the community, for everybody, for the public, for whomever — for an audience." Fashion designers, street musicians, architects, graffiti painters, Michelangelo the Sistine Chapel painter, and television producers all do their work "for whomever," and I delicately classify all these as artists. Mr. Shields may or may not agree that these are artists, but my view is that the "applied" arts are the most important because it is their job to integrate feeling into human life. (Mayen poetry is rarely art, and as far as I know, it was used in everyday life rather than an art gallery!) Just because something is functional doesn't mean it isn't art!

What do you think? I would love to hear opinions on this issue. *Emigre* is an incredibly stimulating and exciting forum. Thank you for your efforts to make it great — you've been tremendously successful!

JEN ROSS

Indianapolis, Indiana

DEAR DAVID,

Thank you for publishing Michael Dooley's interview with Steven Heller. Dooley's questions were both intelligent and pointed; Heller's answers seemed honest and revealing. A compelling and insightful read. Considering Mr. Heller's authoritative position, however, he also managed to reveal himself as arrogant, naive, contradictory, fearful and ignorant.

One could write reams of rebuttals to his often underdeveloped thoughts. Heller claims he wants to "encourage debate," "expand critical discourse," and "be more inclusive." Yet that debate, discourse, and inclusiveness is stifled by his dogmatic devaluation of contemporary graphic design. Rather than making an honest effort to understand this work, Mr. Heller favors writing half-baked "truths" about the subject. His published flat-out rejections of contemporary design are dangerous and close-

minded. Alternatively, design might be better served by someone in his position who offers a forum for insights and explanations of this "challenging" communication.

Equally disappointing but infinitely more troubling is Heller's admission that although his writings may be flawed, he is unwilling to try to improve them. Maybe the "Ugly Eye" article and this interview will serve as an epitaph to the "good old boy" network of mediocrity and fear in the graphic design profession.

DR. WHIRLIGIG

Portland, Oregon, Oregon

DEAR MR. DAVID,

I wanted to write to express how impressed I am with "Whirligig." I keep returning to the spread in *Emigre* '30 and just studying the forms on that page, and I would like to offer my observations on the typeface/design and why I think it's so amazing. I am not a designer or design critic by training. I am actually an art historian, printmaker, and computer artist. When I read the *Emigre* book, I was intrigued with the conceptual layers behind your early typefaces. Because I was not a subscriber to *Emigre* in the early days, the book helped give me some background about the *Emigre* project as you and Mr. Vanderlaan originated it, and to see how it has changed over the years. It is interesting to me that it has become a design and typography forum, whereas it began as a cultural/general arts magazine. Illustration has all but disappeared, except for typographic illustration, or photo reproductions of layouts/ issues '25, '26, '28, '30. The feel is much different from the early *Emigrers* that included paintings, drawings, and computer illustrations. In addition, the *Emigre* font business has grown into its own creature.

Coincidentally with this decline (de-emphasis?) in illustration, *Emigre* has begun publishing several "picture fests," among them "Remedy Extras," "Big Cheese," "TellaParis," "Missionary," (which bridges the gap, being composed of letter forms but supplied in eps format), and your latest, "Whirligig." In some ways, the Whirligig forms remind me of the Designers Republic and their logos & icons, probably because that is the subsequent issue and these two things are just linked in my mind chronologically. I don't mean to say that Whirligig participates in the cultural glandering/corporate identification of DR logos. I see more of a similarity in the building and layering of forms, of the visual development of a vocabulary. It's a simple idea, but not simplistic: take a spiral form or rhythm and explore it. Small parts and gestures are reused or recombined to form new characters.

Whirligig is linked to the technology without being dominated by it. The forms speak clearly



to me of being computer-generated or manipulated with their geometry, the positive/negative reversals, the scaling of shapes, and of course, "cutting and pasting," but the important thing to me is that the computer was used as a tool, not as an end in itself. In other words, things were not just messed around with because the computer can mess around with them. I refer here to the illustrations of *Fast-Forward* and *Output #1* Type is bent, blur-filtered, rotated, outlined...not that these manipulations don't have their context, meaning, and effect, but I find Whirligig's very subtle and very smart manipulations much more compelling. It contains the same logic that lies behind the *Barly* family, and of course, *Madlife*, *Matrix*, and most of your typefaces.

I hope you find this a fair assessment of your typeface. Even if I do not read it exactly as you intended it, I hope that my understanding has given you some insights, or some information at least. Whirligig was the strongest statement, for me, in the entire issue, which I found on the whole to be childish, defensive, and so silly I can't even comment on it.

LOUIS
"MY BRAIN AND WORDS OF COURSE"
MURDER
New York, NY
Printed on America Online

Just finished reading the *Designers Republic* issue (Pg. 1) for the third time, when I received the "Is So, Is Not, Maybe" issue (Pg. 1) which I ripped into immediately. I must agree with Mr. Keedy on the issue of appropriation responsibility that DR has so much disregard for. However, what Mr. Keedy seems to forget is the content in which the ripping off occurs: DR are taking symbols and giving them new meaning, such as Warhol was doing to Campbell's. It's NOT just flagrant ripping-off (or copy-casting because it's faddish), rather, they are creating something new. Although it may appear that they just copied a bunch of Japanese Bubble gum wrappers, I would venture to say they studied the iconography to such depth that their work is a snapshot in time, representing (I feel) the consumption of the 80's. I have soooo much to say, but I will save it for when I can make sense of it...

THE YOSKER
OF PROTEST LAND
Whisperer, New Mexico

Dear Jeffery:
Tot Park Jeffery Keedy and his glib morality. He sounds like one of those perverted good-natured cynical bastards sitting up in those square-shaped offices in New York City! And

ah! what a square circle to live in! Uncool is rent maybe - and already I hear the squares sharpening their weapons of deceit - but fuck them and check this!

If only ye of so little faith would cast aside your jealous prejudices and your intellectual and emotional chaos, let the bidders full of hope and wonder enjoy the substances such forces are wonderfully bound to deliver... without passing in the pool and then yelling you've swallowed some water! Designers Republic, which by the way can piss circles around Jeffery's design ethic, is the freshest thing to hit since insulate copes! And the reason is crystal to those with heart (I) depending on which side of the golden handshake you're on! Well it was just a thought...

E.E. PRATT

New York City, New York

Dear Emigre,

Please could we have an issue that does not mention Cranbrook, CalArts, or Yale? Even as a Quail third-generation graduate of one of these schools, my (white) skin crawls each time you mention "em. And if that's my reaction, what fingernails-on-chalkboard sensation must you be generating in folks who didn't attend one of the Little Three? Remember, there are tons of "unaffiliated" designers who love your magazine.

LICH REHSORTHY

Providence, California

Dr. Emigre, a journalist

Dear Emigre,

Once again, thank you for your glorious generosity. I was more than delighted to see our correspondence in print. The letters read succinctly and were designed typographically with just the right amount of sass! As always, you have produced another super-deluxe issue of *Emigre*, one I am extremely proud to be a part of!

From the response *Emigre* has received, "cathights" are apparently as enjoyed in print as they are in "daytime drama." *Emigre* has put a fire under a lot of designer's feet, and it gives

me great satisfaction to hear from the numerous designers who are thankful to have a venue where they can ask questions, discuss design, and propose ideas and suggestions for the advancement of women in the design profession. And as you can imagine, some designers have fire in their feet. I am curious why some people believe that *Emigre* aims to provoke or invite a "bitch session," or "whining." Let me state for the record: *Emigre* is not meant to sensationalize horror stories. It's meant to avoid and help overcome them. Currently, *Emigre* has a BBS on AOL. *Emigre* can be found by:

Keywording "Exchange"

Double-clicking on the icon "Commodities Center"

Scrolling down to "Women's Board"

Scrolling down to "Emigre"

America Online is presently only introducing larger issues or topics as Forums and feels that although *Emigre* is a solid idea, it is too "category specific" for them at the present time.) On the BBS, *Emigre* would be interested in hearing from volunteers to host Forum or suggestions for Forum topics. *Emigre* also encourages the participation for "Job Listings" and any other suggestions to make *Emigre* a success. Collaboration, after all, is one of the most exhilarating aspects of the design process.

I am also working on a proposal for the AIGA as they are interested in officially hosting *Emigre*. Once again, any suggestions your readers may have will be greatly appreciated. Having just recently moved back to Los Angeles, my Minerva address at Yale will soon be expiring. I invite anyone who would like to send me personal e-mail to write to: Emigre@uicwaol.com. Thanks again, *Emigre*, and thank you to everyone who has joined *Emigre*!

Dear Emigre,

Who am I to be writing to the great *Emigre* magazine? Nobody, actually. I am a print designer at a Los Angeles ad agency, barely more than a typewriter, who sits at her Mac all day long trying to figure out if the "a" in "said" is close enough to the "n."

Anyway, here goes. At which point in design do you say to yourself, "I can't read that anymore? I can't sit and stare at paragraph ends and the next begins?" The pages of *Emigre* are alive with the beautiful vision of creative design and are incredibly satisfying to look at. But to share a point where you say, "What does this mean?" is share my responsibility as the part of the graphic designer in making something legible. Or do we all have to be licensed designers to get the message? To read the story?

AMY SARKIS, YERVIS, CALIFORNIA

SATURDAY all ages
alternative
classic
current
loud and clear, dance here.





ROCK ISLAND and KTCL present the
BIG ADVENTURE
official concert post party! Sat. June 4

THE 1994
SUMMER
FASHION
SHOW IS
COMING
JUNE 10!

Dear Emigre:
I am finished reading "Output" tonight and will now move back to my job. I am sure you will find the work I did on the "Output" work.

New York, NY
New York, NY
New York, NY



Write.

Multi Multi:

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ANDREW BLAUVELT

Blauvelt: I guess we should start where we left off yesterday. You said you're right in the middle of changing the grad program at N.C. State. Was it not working?

Andrew: It just didn't have a focus. It's a fairly large grad program with as many as 40 graduate students, which was surprising to me. When I arrived, I didn't understand how large it was. The only thing that I really knew about the school was that its undergraduate program had a pretty good reputation. The program had already gone

through many changes over the last five or six years because a lot of faculty had left and there were a lot of vacancies. Harrold Davis, the current department head, was interested in developing the graduate program, which was my main reason for taking the job. It's not that it wasn't working, but as is typical of most graduate design programs in this country, it was basically geared towards the same thing as an undergraduate program. Maybe the projects are a little more complex, but the structure and curriculum are similar to undergraduate ones. I was under the impression that most graduate programs were online undergraduate programs. Cranbrook's grad program, for instance, is nothing like any other grad program I've seen.

Blauvelt: It depends. Cranbrook is unique. Yale is unique because it doesn't offer undergraduate degrees. Each school functions within a particular context. Calicut, for example, has the context of being an art school with a particular kind of reputation and the same goes for Cranbrook. N.C. State is a research institution and the context of the University is technological, which is a little different for us in the School of Design. There's no arts program here. They offer classes that you can take as electives, but there are no arts programs. The name of North Carolina has split up art and design. The art programs are at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, which is not too far from here. Here at State, in Raleigh, we have all the design disciplines such as architecture, landscape architecture, industrial design, and graphic design, which is unique for us. The way the program is changing is that we need to have a three-year program for people without a previous degree in graphic design. This was our most popular program, and that is now shifting to an emphasis on a two-year graduate program consisting of four semesters although we still accept people without a previous degree. We have outlined three what we call "critical reason frameworks" that the students will be exposed to. These will cover

three different areas that correspond to the last three semesters. Then, in the fourth semester, the students are on their own and concentrate on their thesis projects. The first semester deals with issues of people interact with graphic design. This is a seminar course with a corresponding studio course. The seminar class is called "Graphic Design as Cognitive Activity." It deals with how people interact with graphic design and whatever it is they are seeing or

reading. Practical research has been done in areas like cognitive science and artificial intelligence in graphic design. We look at what we call "poetic media culture" and talk about changes that happen in society within, say, and cultures through the development of print materials, or literary culture. How do people receive information how has it changed? We draw upon a lot of material that has been written since the 1960s. And we go back and look at the efforts of printing an culture and how people process printed information and what changes or factors might influence the processing. Then we move study down to these areas?

Blauvelt: Actually there is. It normally doesn't fall neatly into the area of graphic design, although some of the studies of print culture have done so. We would also study the shifts from print culture to electronic culture and then, for example, look at people like Marshall McLuhan and his theories about media, and how these are changing today with the advent of electronic technologies. There is actually a lot of research done lately on issues of cognition as they relate to computers, virtual reality and computer interfaces, but of course it's done by scientists, not designers. We'll also talk about how the sense of sight has prevailed in modern culture and the consequences of that. The consequences, of course, are visual in anything that is visual, such as graphic design. They also determine how people look at the history of graphic design, and now you can look at it critically and understand the developments that are taking place.

Blauvelt: How do you justify spending time on the notion of how design fits into culture as opposed to perhaps teaching designers how to program a computer and how to actually create interfaces physically?

Andrew: I'm not sure that it precludes doing that. The structure is such that the seminar course is dealing with a body of knowledge that exists in many different fields and bringing that together for discussion among graphic designers, while the studio component is still practice oriented. So the students would still be making things. The thing that we want to avoid is to just have discussion. But the discussion is necessary to see how that body of knowledge actually affects design making. I am not saying that spending time studying this is not valid, but do you think that the work that you might be studying now was created by designers who asked the same questions about their own work as you do now? How important is it for a designer to know, beforehand, how their work functions culturally, or what the cultural consequences of it will be?

Andrew: It's important to be as aware as possible. I believe that people are beginning to understand that their individual actions and decisions are controlled and influenced by other actions and reactions and graphic design is just a microcosm of that general notion. People have studied this sociologically. People's awareness of their part in the larger scheme of things has become more relative mostly because we have gone through an intense period of criticism and theory about the consequences of not seeing what it is you are doing or thinking or saying. That these actions are only relative to the specific time and place in which they are being performed. I agree. But if you become so conscious of it, wouldn't that somewhat stifle the creative process?

Andrew: There is only so much within the individual's control or even perception and that limits the impact that that kind of self-conscious thinking would have on the making of things. Plus, it's difficult to jump back and forth between the practice of graphic design and this discussion in general. However, a lot of graphic designers don't understand their work outside of the

Prospectus



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Prospectus Book Design Team, N.C. State, 1994. Cover designed by Andrew Blauvelt. © Andrew Blauvelt.



Prospectus Book Design Team, N.C. State, 1994. Cover designed by Andrew Blauvelt. © Andrew Blauvelt.



Prospectus Book Design Team, N.C. State, 1994. Cover designed by Andrew Blauvelt. © Andrew Blauvelt.

Public Figure

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC FIGURES AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA. IT IS AN ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE REPRESENTATION OF PUBLIC FIGURES AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA. IT IS AN ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE REPRESENTATION OF PUBLIC FIGURES AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA.

the first semester deals with issues of people interact with graphic design. This is a seminar course with a corresponding studio course. The seminar class is called "Graphic Design as Cognitive Activity." It deals with how people interact with graphic design and whatever it is they are seeing or

THE CULT (IVATION) OF DISCRIMINATION:

THE TASTE MAKING POLITICS OF STEVEN HELLER

BY ANDREW BLAUVELT

"Maybe I am an old fuddy-duddy. The bottom line, however, is about the issue of style. You don't have to accept that, but you must accept that I'm more interested in politics than esthetic or anti-esthetic concerns about design." — Steven Heller, *Jaeger* No. 30

the illuminating interview with design critic Steven Heller conducted by Michael Pooley for *Jaeger* (No. 30), served only to underscore my constant frustrations with the state of graphic design criticism, as well as with the thoughts of Mr. Heller. It seems difficult not to encounter the writings of Steven Heller, as editor of the *Journal of Graphic Design*, the *WON*'s mouthpiece, he has one of the larger platforms for discussing graphic design with the minority of practitioners who belong to this professional trade organization. Although this is his main venue, he appears in numerous others, in what amounts to nothing less than a cottage industry — symposia, lectures, articles for *Eye*, *Print* and others, and the steady stream of books published bearing his name (mostly as co-author). All these innumerable activities are, of course, to his credit, despite any of their individual shortcomings or the impact they have on the state of writing about graphic design, therefore, I am both upset and intrigued by his appearance in the pages of *Jaeger*, upset because it seems, notwithstanding Jeff Needy's comment that this whole "ugly" business is "tired already," that Heller has managed to work his way into the pages of yet another design publication, not just any magazine, however, but the one that serves as the "celebratory" vehicle for much of the design that Heller finds so troublesome. This initial shock quickly gave way to the kind of intrigue one finds in the "rubber-necking" of spectators to some grisly accident. And while Pooley may be beating a dead horse (or "an old fuddy-duddy"), he extracts the kinds of responses from Heller that begin to place his writings, and ultimately their underlying motives, in a clearer perspective: just what are these underlying motives? I believe it's something we can detect in the work of Steven Heller [the critic, not necessarily the designer], and following his own advice, we need to look at things besides the "cult of the ugly" article. After all, this article represents his summation of certain works of the last decade or so — a conclusion based on the pile that has crossed his desk and that has come to typify a certain contemporary sensibility. There is a note of irony in the inability of Heller to name the work (besides "ugly") with one of those fifty terms with which he has helped to turn the history of graphic design into a roll call of styles. The closest he comes

contrast of what they get less in. This discussion has been going on a long time. To be more aware of what happens in graphic design outside of their control, I believe, is ultimately more empowering for designers than pretending that they don't know or don't care. What happens to your design outside of your control? I'm very interested in this. How people reuse graphic design, how they interpret graphic design, how they reuse cultural symbols and their form of things.

Jaeger: But it's my own experience that most design work will be interpreted in nearly as many different ways as there are viewers.

Heller: I believe that we need to exaggerate the amount of individual interpretation. This is, of course, a generalization and it depends on the actual piece and the type of graphic design.

Part of the ideas I'm talking about come from having studied at Cranbrook and being aware of certain theoretical propositions that were being thrown around there. I have, since, followed through where I felt, and I now realize that many of these theoretical assumptions that govern the making of work at Cranbrook say in the last decade are really incomplete understandings of those theories. If you followed through a lot of these theories, you would arrive at a more sobering conclusion about how people's reactions to various pieces manifest themselves. In the last decade, at Cranbrook, there was an emphasis on viewer interpretation. But so much designer intention, but viewer perception in terms of interpretation of the artwork. At Cranbrook, that got generalized to the point of, "Well, everyone reads it differently, so how are you going to try to control what the designer means, and can you?" Whereas a lot of the theory from which that question originally sprang would say that in society at large, through the channels of communications that graphic design involves itself with, there are probably only certain responses possible. Not an infinite variety of responses, but a limited range of responses, and they can be anticipated. One person may receive a design in a completely opposite way than intended. There are communication studies that show that the range of interpretation is actually within a certain range or band and are not nearly as infinite as a lot of graphic designers are supposing. This has to do with the language that graphic designers engage in, which evolves socially.

When any specific project you can always theorize an ideal audience. Certainly one of the things that is always at play in graphic design is the idea of an ideal solution, the idea of an ideal audience and also an ideal sort of response. That is really a mythology itself. Actually, the second semester of grad students were concerned with aspects of culture and society, the sociological and cultural aspects of looking at graphic design in any number of ways. For example, we had a graduate student who minored in cultural anthropology and majored in graphic design and that tended to help the design of the study.

Jaeger: You brought up Cranbrook. Regardless of their intentions, schools such as Cranbrook and Calicut will inevitably be described by the design press, critics and professionals alike as simply "the houses of style." Is that on your mind when you are rethinking the design department as you are doing right now? I mean, are you con-

cerned about being labeled that?

Heller: Not really. The main concern is simply from a marketing point of view. How do you position yourself as distinct from schools such as Yale, RISD, Cranbrook or Calicut? If content is everything, then certainly we exist in a unique place. What we have to offer at M.C. State is unique regardless of what it is. We are not concerned in presenting our particular angle. The classes are set up such that they will be taught by more than one individual at the same time, and certainly the faculty here is pretty diverse and its interests and its opinions are diverse. The idea is to juxtapose instructors within each of the studios — a sort of "good cop, bad cop" thing. What happens is that some instructors tend to gear more towards trying to use the information that is available, say through the seminar, as a way to validate or legitimize the things that are made in the studio, whereas other instructors would use the same information to criticize those things.

Also, here at State, we make a big distinction between undergraduate and graduate education. Since graphic design here is part of the whole School of Design in which many programs are accredited professionally, its undergraduate program is geared towards professional practice.

Our graduate program, on the other hand, is not geared toward a correct definition of professional practice. It probably works in opposition to that, to be large and vague.

Jaeger: What makes a good graduate design program? Why, for instance, do you think Cranbrook became such a force in graphic design? And, similarly, why do you think it's having some of its edge right now?

Heller: One reason why I might be losing its edge, perhaps, is due to the impending departure of the McClays. Also, its "cutting edge" work has been absorbed and even anticipated by others. That is the usual fate of taking an avant-garde position. But I think it comes down to resources. Ultimately, Cranbrook is a very small community, a hundred and fifty art and design students. It's also very clustered and isolated, although they've been able to transcend that because the McClays have an international presence. But, in terms of understanding and practicing graphic design, the issues are necessarily interdisciplinary. Therefore, I have a real hard time understanding how, let's say, an art school is going to be worth good for the overall quality of design students, not just the making, but the understanding. The "triangle" area here consists of three neighboring campuses, M.C. State in Raleigh, Duke University in Durham and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. There is a huge number of educational resources and departments that are mutually known and so do do a lot of things. The graduates can take classes at both Duke and at M.C. for credit and attend numerous conferences and lectures.

Jaeger: How important is the actual facility in terms of drawing studios in?

Heller: It's important, but it's different from some of the other graduate schools because, for instance, this fall we'll have eight full-time faculty members. At Cranbrook there is only one person. Yes, I believe, has two full-time instructors with many guest critics and Calicut has about three or four people that are there on a regular basis working with the students. Most studios choose by reputation, many "comparison shops" and therefore apply as the usual place, a few will search based on the program's philosophy.

Jaeger: What would you say are the biggest differences between your own design education both undergraduate and graduate, and what you are teaching right now?

Heller: I went to the Herron School of Art as an undergraduate in visual communication and I double majored in photography and



is that ubiquitous term "post-modern" in his book *graphic style* [1988] written with seymour chwast. it is here that we may begin to detect some underlying motives when he notes in the discussion of the chapter on "post-modern" graphic design:

"Teachers at the Cranbrook Academy in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan formulated an analytical design approach based on the theory of deconstruction: the limits of abstract visual communication are tested by testing how many levels of meaning can be expressed through complex typographic configurations. While ostensibly decorative, this theory is best applied in the functional design work of contemporary Dutch firms Studio Quanter and Total Design.

putting their confused notion of deconstruction aside, heller and chwast give what seem to be an objective description of this phenomenon in the first sentence and quickly cast it into subjective relief with the second. in that move, they confuse a theory with a "decorative" practice (read as superficial, without utility), and suggest that it's better when practiced outside cranbrook (implying that it isn't "functional" when it is. this statement is perplexing because the work of studio pumber and total design couldn't have been more antithetical at the time and neither firm has embraced this theoretical practice.

it is this problem with "theory" and the schools that propagate it that is central for heller. this comes through clearly in his answers during the interview to questions about everything from the student-initiated project output to the writing of design criticism.

"Output reinforced what i was feeling in terms of the unreliability of the theoretical," an overemphasis on and misappropriation of, literary theory to explain design. This struts me in the pragmatic school of design where theory is less important than instinct."

or in a discussion of his role in editing the *azoo* journal of graphic design.

"i thought i wouldn't include any of these academics who deal with theory. Post-Structuralism and semiotics. i'm just sick of that. i can't get through it. it is impossible to read. That theoretical construct isn't useful for graphic design as most of us practice it."

in the "ugly" article, heller identifies three schools in particular: cranbrook, calarts and the rhode island school of design (azoo). azoo was included for its transgressions in the use of semiotic theory since the 1970s; but it was and is cranbrook, and by extension calarts, where the blame for this new work belongs.

it's interesting to note that the present day rule is spared from this list, not because they do not commit many of the same "crimes," but probably because of the presence of certain individuals connected to yale in the previous installment of *eye* (no.8), a special issue on american graphic design guest-edited by steven heller, which includes an interview with shella levrant de gretteville, an article by michael rock and susan sellers, and the feature on skelos-wedell (all connected to yale as instructors and/or alumni). in this same issue, the use of theory at cranbrook is taken up by mike hicks's feature on skelos-wedell, "techno cubists," when he quips, "... Cranbrook Academy of Art, the multidisciplinary home to classic airspac..." or in the more critical thoughts of mike mills in "the [Layered] vision thing" when he states: "but there is a troubling contradiction in the way Cranbrook interprets Post-Modern theory." if there were any doubts that cranbrook figured centrally in the realm of the "ugly," they would have been dispelled with heller's article "where does graphic design?" this article discussed the publication of rick roymon's book, *typography now: the next wave* [which highlights many alumni's work] in the *azoo* journal [vol. 10, no.1 1992] where katharine mccoy's poster for cranbrook floats in a space carved from the text - a sign of all that is wrong with the state of graphic design. the signifying power (sorry, stave) of mccoy's poster is also used by mills in the illustration of his article, a visual equation with the verbal caption: "wort schutters + kathy mccoy = anonymous."

ultimately, the real debate is not simply about ugliness, "theory" or cranbrook but the role that education plays, or fails to play, in the practice of

graphic design. This program was very solid, very deep. You go through the initial foundation year, which is very typical of most art schools. You study painting and drawing and color and art history and that sort of thing and it is the sophomore year you declare your major. At N.C. State things are more flexible. The drawback of a program such as it existed at Cranbrook is that you are very limited in your elective choices. Here we do have flexibility. For instance there is an option where students can what we call "swing out" of the department into another department after the third semester of graphic design study. They can take a beginning architecture course or a big early industrial design course and they can go that far up to two semesters. In

three's a little less depth in terms of specific graphic design classes that they have to take. If they didn't, in my unit and just took graphic design, the classes would be equal to Herman. No cover at the same material, we probably just condense it more. So yes, i think that the undergraduate training that i did have was very solid and as a teacher i wanted to be involved with a program that had as much material and depth as possible without being constricting. Some programs are just too deep and don't allow the students enough flexibility. They end up studying

our responsibility as teachers. The responsibility of students is to integrate or reject those ideas in their work. i guess you can say we have an every agenda about what we will introduce to students, in terms of knowledge, you know it's there or the rest about it isn't background atmosphere or something like intellectual work. Because we are interested in understanding graphic design it social and cultural, really, we tend to elaborate other things, the bigger picture and its bigger consequences. We try to balance that internal exploration of personal vocabulary you find in places like Cranbrook and Calarts with some ideas about how to place it in relationship to other things. We are also much more liberal about degree requirements, such as the fact that you must present and defend your ideas to the faculty and your peers in terms of a thesis project, not just a statement about the work you've made, so that it does contribute to a body of knowledge that we just about start design process or vocabulary

again. You went from Herman directly to Cranbrook. Then from Cranbrook, you went immediately into teaching at Rhode State, and then taught at Herman. How much professional graphic design experience do you have?

well. Actually, i think i have a lot. it's just not the experience of working in an office. If that's what you mean. I've been freelancing continuously since right on a number of different projects and i've

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too much graphic design in school. The more common problem with many undergrad programs however, is a shocking lack of depth in the curriculum - a handful of classes and voila you're a graphic designer! I know her in terms of graduate school, your experience at Cranbrook was very different from the grad program you are now sitting up at N.C. State?

Answer: Yes. There are no courses at Cranbrook and really only one teacher. The curriculum would vary according to the students who were there and what had been done by previous students. In that sense it was highly reactive. Our program definitely has more structure, but i think it allows for much freedom. We introduce students to different bodies of knowledge, mostly from outside the field of graphic design. That is

productive. I know people like John Deane or Art Berman. But even if you're not working with, not for, other designers and their companies. **Ques:** How important do you think it is for design teachers to have professional design experience? **A:** Very important. It's a lot, particularly with the undergraduate level which is geared toward practice. I've a lot worried about going from undergraduate directly to grad and straight to working. That's not something i would recommend. I think it is important to have the experiences of doing professional work in a variety of ways. I was just able to corroborate that by producing work on my own, which not every student i teach as many as four or five days a week. Sometimes you get afterwards all sometimes you get nothing off. At Herman, which is an art school, the teachers are required to have about half

graphic design. That's why the project output has been featured so prominently in Heller's discussions: "It [output] was released as a document of what design is about today, what design education is about today." Indeed, for Heller and many others, something is "wrong" in the [small] worlds of professional graphic design and education. Before all of this, education wasn't complicated by "theory" and simply provided instruction in the professional practice of graphic design. Paul Rand, who is offered by Heller as the antidote to ugliness, also believes in the irrelevancy of "theory" and of "politics." What Rand and Heller fail to see, however, is the operation of politics in the theories that they themselves (and everyone else) engage in everyday. There is a politics and a set of theories about how graphic design is allowed to exist in society; we all know its outcome: it's the professional practice of graphic design. We take this definition of practice for granted, we don't necessarily question its existence or its rules, we simply see it as something inevitable - it precedes you. For Heller, the relevancy of an education not in service to the existing definition of practice means that it has no function, no meaning to him and others like him. The resolution of this conflict, usually expressed in the schism of "practice vs. theory," used to be found in the safe dismissal of such ideas to the margins of a few grad programs or to the heights of an "Ivory tower," but something happened. It began appearing in the spaces that professional practice cherishes: design competitions, books, trade magazines and even had the audacity to come across one art director's desk, posing as junk mail. In order to deal with this situation, Heller must first try to marginalize such activities by tracing them back to academia [to the land of theory and preferably its capital city, Cranbrook], then claim a violation has occurred in the rules of practice and, in order to deal with the few instances of its use by professional designers in the "real world," dismiss this work as simply that of "copycats," seduced by the visual transgressions of young radicals.

When Heller says he is "more interested in politics than esthetic or anti-esthetic concerns," he "speaks out of both sides of [his] mouth" (as he once remarked). While Heller has written about graphic design used in overtly political terms (Angry graphics with Marrie Jacobs), including his own past political activities, this is not what I believe is revealed in

what work, they need to be practicing artists. This carries over into graphic design, where they say you have to be a practicing graphic designer in order to teach. At this school it's different because we are in an art school context. A lot of what we do is research-based design history or investigations of appearances in new media or how to use design as a process for teaching other subjects. A lot of the work done here is research-oriented and so as artists they expect that also from the graphic design teachers. Although some commercial graphic design can be considered research, most of it really isn't when you get right down to it, it simply reproduces the now.

Heller: How important do you think the research and development, such as it exists at schools like Cranbrook, is?

Answer: Yeah.
Heller: What's the goal?
Answer: To drive the professor.
Heller: Where is it?
Answer: Off the cliff! (Laugh)
Screaming into the void.
Heller: Well, there's a lot of people screaming; perhaps you've reached your goal.
Answer: It's about motion. When you're involved in the everyday practice of graphic design, which I don't want to get down to any way because I know how intensely complicated and difficult it is, there's an segment of the field that is really dedicated to research and development, except perhaps for a couple offices that are involved in various types of "strategic planning."

So what's really left to do it? The schools, and that's what we're trying to do here. The question we have to ask ourselves is "What is graduate study in graphic design when does that mean, and why do you get this degree?" We can't justify it by saying that it's sort of an advanced undergraduate education, because that doesn't really happen in any other field. When you are a master or doctoral student in any other field, you are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge of the discipline. So we have to make those distinctions all the time in conversations with people that the practice of graphic design is one aspect of the field of graphic design, and there is a responsibility to things like criticism and history. The only people who really are taught to do this, and the place where it seems to work the best in society, is in an educational context.

Heller: With this increase of interest in graduate studies in graphic design, how come there's still so little design criticism?

Answer: Well, graphic design itself isn't a very old practice. Criticism is one of these things that simply isn't popular when you are on the receiving end of it, which is ironic since we have no problem with that in art in school, but somehow that doesn't carry over into professional practice. It's one of the things that we're trying to fix here.

That is really interesting, because I was just reading the interview with Steven Heller, and he too makes the point, and I think the interview does as well, of where is the criticism in graphic design and what is it about?

Heller: And who is it for? Who is reading?
Answer: Exactly. My initial response to Steven Heller's writing was to think of it as a journalist sort of criticism, which is different from what I normally think of as criticism. Steven Heller is operating out of

an impure or ramshackle theoretical base, which is to say that he doesn't tell you up front what his models are, as well as a series of ethical judgments. And in retrospect, you find out he changes his opinion in the course of that interview, you are left with the position switch, and you are left wondering what the critical position was that he took to begin with, and if he has abandoned it and what does that mean? I can't see specific things, I don't have the interview in front of me, but the feeling that remains is that he is trying to be inclusive or plural and there are not the remedies to criticism.

Heller: So you believe there has to be a very clear bias?

Answer: When you look at criticism in other fields, it's very different. In literary criticism, it's very up front. You have to create your position and defend it. When it gets worked, it makes it seem that you assume it's natural or something. Here I'm thinking specifically of the article "The Fall of the Ivy" and that its author's models are just assumed, and that there's no foundation for arguing his position. What kind of approach is he using? Is he using some French-based 19th-century aesthetic philosophy and what are the other options? And how do you defend that in the late 20th century? I am not saying that Heller's journalistic approach doesn't have a place. It certainly does, but in terms of graphic design, I don't think that we have that "critical" kind of criticism yet. We need criticism at all levels and for many different audiences, which doesn't mean "easy listening" criticism. We're trying to do it as a writing component, a side component that filters through all of the new graduate program. And we're trying to get across the idea that, in a sense, writing forces you to make your arguments clear, and putting thought to paper commits you in a way that the casual circuit doesn't. But I know that the reviewer charge and Heller makes, it's in his commentary in this interview, is a sort of intellectual backlash that says that this kind of criticism would be so bad is theory that it would be economic and therefore just not useful. This can't necessarily true. Heller is probably thinking of a certain kind of criticism as being the only useful response. What this anti-intellectual gathering tells you is that it is, itself, a "theory" disguised as "common sense." There are really interesting things being developed. For example, in new criticism, there's a developing error that is a blend of Freud, psychoanalysis and autobiography creating a sort of subversion of "objective truth," if you want to call it that. In that way, the style of writing could be more accessible, more individualistic, without necessarily sacrificing the development of argument.

Heller: How come you haven't written about this? How come you don't submit pieces to the *After the Journal*, *Art, Eye, Print*, etc.?

Answer: I've just finished reading your issue so and there's a comment by Jeff Kady in there about teachers getting all their ask and writing more, and I think it's starting to happen, slowly. I'm working on it. I have written for the American Center for Design's *Statements* and a review for a new journal called *2nd*. I'm actually in the middle of editing three volumes of essays on graphic design history for the journal *Visible Language*. There's an outline that I recently submitted to *Design Issues*. It's called "The Writing of Design and the Design of Writing." It's about how designers can use the intellectual components of writing, if that makes sense, and to make arguments visually and verbally. It's about a search for the variety of writing possible.

Heller: I know you're probably getting paid for it, if any money at all, which is the norm in publishing writing on design. Do you think that's a big problem contributing to the fact that there's so little writing being

"As instinctive decisions slowly develop and acquire support from other people and from ideas of a related nature, a system of response and action develops that makes you a specific individual with your own concept of reality. You will find delight where another finds ugliness. You will see order where another sees chaos. You will see clarity and elegance where another sees only barrenness and sterility. The lines of communication are down and verbal efforts to handle this gap are usually inadequate." — Sylvia Ching, "Personal notes on design," *same journal*, volume 3, number 4, 1991.



his comment. Rather, Heller is concerned with proper decorum — a defense of conventional (mainstream) professional practice with clearly definable limits. And, as Heller admits, the limits are a function of the marketplace and are, presumably, not to be redrawn by individuals.

Heller's stated disinterest in esthetic concerns is contradicted by the sheer volume of his literary output. He has spent a great deal of time and energy defining and classifying the esthetic characteristics of things like "south modern" or "Italian art deco" (his latest books with wife Louise Rilli), including his discriminating judgments about taste in obvious things like the "ugly" article, thus, esthetic concerns become the vehicle through which Heller can launch an attack on the transgressors of any pronouncing designs ugly, he is able to deny them any significance that right lie outside simple judgments ("yes/no") by framing them in solely esthetic terms ("ugly/not ugly"). Of course, critical reaction to his article has not been argued on esthetic grounds — no one seems to be suggesting that the work is "beautiful" — but on other grounds, such as the context of the work, the intent of the designers, the methodology employed, etc. These reactions understand that the work under discussion can be framed in any number of ways other than the personal tastes of the critic. These critical responses are coming out of the same position that Heller wants to banish, namely the theoretical.

For Heller, what is ultimately dangerous is not whether a piece of design is ugly, but rather the politics and theories that support it. Therefore, Heller reveals a truth when he states that he is interested in politics however, it's the politics of taste-making, just as much, the museum of modern art and others offered us the concept of "good design" in the fifties, Heller, and others feel the need to defend the theoretical base it was erected on, all but onced in the expression: "form follows function." The horrifying of terms like "form" and "function" and the corollary expression "appropriateness" for their cause is important because these terms have not necessarily been redefined yet and, therefore still carry much of their modernist baggage. It's the same strategy employed by fundamentalist conservatives, who have hijacked the concept of "family" for their own political ends, the uses of theory and practice are always political, even when they claim that they are not. Heller contends that theory is not useful for practice because its jargon substitutes for real content, but what field doesn't have its own jargon? After all, I remember learning quite a bit of it while studying the practice of graphic design, why shouldn't we learn it to understand the significance of what we make? Besides, the true difficulty with theory is not jargon but that it requires us to "unthink" our presumptions and assumptions, a task that is harder to accomplish the longer you are surrounded by what seems to be given and therefore unchangeable. It seems appropriate, then, that much of this "ugly" work is from "young turks,"

down right now?

where it is. If there were money, you would see a different group of people writing. For teachers and practitioners, who make their livelihood outside of writing, getting paid at not getting paid may not make a difference. There are very few people who make their living writing criticism. I can only think of a couple of people who do this like Brian Kavanagh in England. For example, we're starting to see the beginning of a rift between the kind of writing which is a mere of a bridge between the suddenly realistic alternatives that may happen in graduate school versus the kind of pedantic discussions that would take place in the field. There needs to be that sort of bridge between theory and practice, which might be criticism.

Since Michael Rock also makes that comment about the lack of writing done by academics, and I tip my hat to both Michael Rock and Jeffrey and also Lorraine Wick, because they are publishing quite a bit of writing, besides teaching and doing commercial design work.

And the people who do have the time to write and do research and who do have the institutional support are teachers and there really is as excuse for them not to. Hopefully that will take effect. The biggest effect is going to be through education, though, it always has been. Technology history and things like that. I think education has done a good job of figuring out the shortcomings and addressing those areas. Hopefully, through graduate level studies, at least, and more and more at the undergraduate level. You find more of this sort of criticism and writing taking place, but always as a vehicle to understand what it is you're doing. I guess that's the basic definition of graduate studies. If you are studying the field of graphic design, then you are doing it in a way that interprets it.

Again. This leads back to the question: how have still not answered, about the value of research and development in graduate design programs such as Cranbrook. What is the end, has Cranbrook contributed to the practice of graphic design? Is that not important? Is research and development perhaps not meant to eventually contribute to the practice of design?

Again. The students who do graduate studies at Cranbrook or wherever, come to take time out from whatever it was they were doing before, which creates a specific sort of environment. So the value of graduate study means something very different to them, individually, than when you put all of those little pieces back. If you really do believe that you are supposed to contribute something in this growing body of knowledge then that, all that accumulation, will make a different picture for the individual and for the field of theory, it depends on your definition of PhD. Ellen Lupton in the latest issue of Row Book, makes a case for a certain kind of visual

research done outside the context of client practice, using as an example of a project chosen by the jury that had no client — just someone who purchased three puzzle pieces and discovered they were made from the same die and interlocked the interiors. The jury's selection of that project and Lupton's promotion of it are interesting because they make us question the function of shows like the AIGA New York. All the definition of graphic design, and it seems like seeing some designer self-promote thing

as the only way to circumvent the class system is there anything definable that Cranbrook has contributed to graphic design as we know it now? It's the million dollar question, right?

Again. I think there's a book [laughter] I believe there's been a disaster impact from that school, although I wouldn't want to overstate it.

Again. Are you concerned that the most noticeable impact has been stylistic? Again. Absolutely. For some reason, probably not a very good reason, stylistic designers, at large, and I don't know how many times you hear the same cliché all over again, aren't interested in substance over style or content over form, and I think all of those judgments are a little misguided, to say the least. How can form operate independently of content? If, how can you drop something having a visual style when it is visual? What you need to respond to the question "Is it a style or a spirit?" is that the style is subservient for content. It's just an everyday reality for certain types of graphic design that it has very little interesting content in and of itself. You find an awful lot of paper design that's done where style is the content, although I don't want to dismiss style so easily, because it's really important to practicing designers that it's their one way out of some of the mess in a way you can see it as a mode of resistance. It's a symbolic, almost false resistance to other factors, but it's still an important one for them and it does produce effects, some effects, which just can't be dismissed as "design for designers."

Again. In this issue we published a letter by Gerner Swanson and he brought up the notion of history in design work. He says, "Form makes a claim, and designers are responsible for the claims their work makes." To explain his need for history, to bring up the point of how time and attention are the most valuable assets of the Information Age we live in and that perhaps deeply layered, ambiguous design, which they have something worthwhile to say, as symbolically, because they're up on valuable come to take in the situation. Now. Recently I read an article by Michael Rock in *Eye Magazine* about P. Scott Makela. The thought that I came away with after reading that, and the thought that I had for a while, independently of that, is that there are basically two different genres of graphic design work. Work that's symptomatic, that reflects its condition, and work that is offered as the cure to antidote to that sort of approach. What Swanson is saying, in terms of the information glut that we have, it "Do we need someone such as Scott Makela offering designs of that kind of chaos?" Or "Is the role of the graphic designer to cut through that kind of chaos?"

Again. What's the answer? Again. One role is navigator, which is a little different than what I said earlier about these two camps of graphic design as symptom and graphic design as cure. We had the cure in Modernism, in the other camp, graphic design as symptom, we have Cranbrook. Early McCoy makes the statement of information channel switching, which we call "surfing" now, or "cybersurfing" or whatever. But think the Cranbrook party line response would be that there is still a hierarchy of information. This is what Korte would argue, I think, that there is clearly more importance than others, whether or not that actually comes in a whole other matter. The idea is to go around the center of the stuff, and give it back to the viewer, saying "It's upholding the information chain of your impending future, or your present" and what is that? In a critique, I would be left with the same question, Why are you offering the symptom of the present now? What's interesting with Scott Makela, in terms of the context of that discussion, is how it works in the Minneapolis College of

Art and Design catalog. I'm thinking of the previous one. I haven't seen the new one. He's taking an information complexity which has really been empowered by electronic technology, and then sending it back to print.

Tom: Beside the question "Does the design help or obstruct the reader's ability to read the information?" there's always the other function of design, which is to attract. This is done more easily when you are loud than when you are quiet. This is where Scott's work succeeds.

Andrew: True, but attraction is always assumed to guarantee sustained interest. I'm going to see what it will be electronically, on screen. Although I've taken some short things he's done, I'd like to see some of his work either not applied

commercially to better understand its potential or simply greater in length which is easier said than done, of course. I'd like to see his experiments more freely so he knows his work could be pushed longer. Are you saying that he is applying his way of working on the wrong medium?

Tom: I think there is some trap in the transfer back to print. I'm not saying that print isn't chaotic but we've certainly had it for a long time, and we certainly know how to deal with it a lot better than some of the electronic media know. The fact that it's electronically created and then put back into print is not without precedent, in off lead type had nothing to do with paper, either. Type and page layouts were built up in metal but eventually printed onto paper. We never wondered if perhaps we should read the information off the bed of the printing press.

Andrew: True, but the challenge lies in dealing with it in its milieu. Besides, you are always going to have a hybrid between different types of media, which evolve out of three modes of information, whether it's oral or whether it's literate, that is to say based on reading and writing on paper. When we find ourselves between differing forms of media, we get hybridity. This is what Marshall McLuhan was arguing in the '60s, with the advent of television and video. All of these different modes or media/dimensions dictate a different range of response in different people. There are some interesting things that could happen in electronic design that could go back to print, though. I'm thinking of one of the student projects here, which asks what happens when we get rid of the nonredundancy in typography.

For example, what happens when we don't have things like bold or italic, which really evolved through print? And when kind of vocabulary can we look at when putting typography in motion? We've been asked to print for so long. We are used to talking about and teaching about meter, rhythm and pacing, and things like that, on a very different way than what can actually happen now. With electronic media you can have real time, movement, and sound. You're

not dealing with a clearly defined page anymore.

There is something interesting happening when Scott transfers what is principally an effect of electronics back into print. I guess I'm asking for more activity along that front, because I don't know what to make of it yet. I don't know whether it's very interesting and what extension it's making it any, or whether it's done more or less automatically.

Tom: So you agree with Michael Bach's

assessment of Scott's work?

Andrew: Yes. Although I thought I was reading the article all wrong in the beginning. Actually, I was worried about the article. It seemed to be more anecdotal, almost an account, not a critical account, and at the end it seemed to make a happy tone.

Tom: He used a similar approach in his article on Fabian Barron in *D*.

Andrew: It would be interesting to ask Michael what his strategy is. I guess the people who are going to be interested in reading an article on Fabian Barron or Scott Makela might need that inside track if they are going to slowly evolve into accepting a critical standpoint.

Tom: I hate to continue to beat you over the head with this one question, but you've still not answered my question about Cranbrook and what their definitive contribution to design is, besides the book, and besides the stylistic maneuver that people have picked up.

Andrew: I don't want to exaggerate Cranbrook's role in design, but I think it did play an important part in developing the current state of graphic design. If you want to call it that. In terms of the "voice" of the graphic designer, and ending some ideas about concepts of neutrality, the limits of readability, actually. Certainly its impact is still present, because now you have people like Jeff Mead, Edward Fella and Gershom Wild teaching at Caluma and they are all products of Cranbrook. They are carrying on a particular tradition. I believe that many programs around the country are actually indebted to the notion that were explored at Cranbrook. So too are many designers who I probably never admit such influence because it diminishes their status as originality. Surely Cranbrook didn't invent all of this art of their art, but, in terms of assembling ideas from other places and disciplines and putting them into the profession of graphic design, I think that's where Cranbrook has played a big role. Perhaps the biggest impact is the recognition that such educational programs are receiving. This bothers many practitioners who seem to think the work produced in schools is irrelevant to them because it's made by "kids" who don't understand the conditions of their "real world" but must have all too well.

Tom: Do you think that schools such as Cranbrook and Yale and Colgate have created a trend, where you have fairly young designers who perhaps couldn't find their way in the "real world" and go back to grad school to be reinitiated or reoriented themselves, and then graduate only to find out it is now even more difficult to combine the type of work they have just explored, and then go out and teach, and are basically frustrated designers who teach?

Andrew: That's the big one question. It's something that I think about a lot. One of the reasons that you try to gauge in what are the reasons for graduate school in the first place, and what's evolving, and what are their backgrounds, and the sort of thing. You're asking an important question because I think that you are seeing an awful lot of very young and inexperienced designers who teach. One of the few responsive environments after grad school is education. Although there's got to be something other than this, education is the only viable alternative right now. Or the only seemingly viable alternative. Part of the reason too for a lot of people who go to grad school is to invent new scenarios for work. It may be doing some hybrid thing, maybe it's doing a little bit of designing, a little bit of writing and criticism, a little bit of consulting, or seeking grants, governmental grants or state grants, or institutional grants. Also, it's the degree needed to teach college. For a lot of people coming into a grad program, that's the main motivation. You certainly don't need a degree to practice graphic design. Why get a second one? Why even get the

done as it is by students who may or may not have been initiated into the workings of the "real world." As literary critic Terry Eagleton confirms:

"The real difficulty with theory, however, springs not from first sophistication, but from exactly the opposite — from its demand that we return to childhood by rejecting what seems natural and refusing to be fobbed off with shifty answers from well-meaning elders."

It is lamentable that the terms for discussing graphic design critically still rest on esthetic judgments that are used to direct attention away from the arbitrary nature of certain rules of practice. Ironically, the keys to understanding this condition are to be found in the realm of the theoretical — a space where a critical, reflexive approach can expose these rules not as given or "natural," but rather as constructed and alterable.

Theory is vital to understanding all work, even when it is used as an explanation for certain works. This is an important point that has become confused in the debate certain critics have expected that the "theory" discussed in places like Cranbrook would reveal itself as an illustration of principles in the work produced. They study the works looking for [visual] clues as symptoms of an affliction of theory. What is not so readily apparent is the use of theory to guide both the process of designing and the search for ideologies that are used to support every piece of design produced, regardless of who makes it. The bigger world outside of both graphic design education and commercial practice offers many useful theories for understanding the interdisciplinary nature of our field, while it may be a mistake to simply apply these theories without regard for their original contexts, it's equally a mistake to dismiss them because they are seemingly irrelevant to the business (as usual?) of graphic design. As long as we continue to try to understand design as somehow transparent (where meanings mysteriously reveal themselves on the surface of the work), we will be blind to all of those things that society allows for in their understanding of design, as well as what we allow ourselves to imagine design to be.

Therefore, I accept Heller's challenge, when he tells Douglas: "So it may be time for other people, such as yourself, to go only carry the baton (of design criticism) but go to the next intellectual plane. And that's perfectly fine with me."

me, too.

[illegible]

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It is not as if the first picture on the oil change goes into a museum or is otherwise set away where it can be viewed. It is not as if the first picture is the only one that is taken. It is not as if the first picture is the only one that is taken.

Returns are dependent on the value of α

Whereas α is, and based on a list, where α is a series of the same α is. Using words and images and combinations of α images.

[illegible]

DEGREE OF THE DEPENDENCE ON A GIVEN...

[illegible]

Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture by John Hejduk

and 1.0–2.0% of the Muslim or Muslim-adjacent population worldwide. This test gives the way to distinguish sick and well. Sick are busy about withness and healthy are busy about wellness.

First Moxie Tunes, Six Books With Six Issues, For Adult Shapers & Designers

[illegible]

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Letter and image of Robert Mapplethorpe

From apps, what you might call it, a "visual" history of typography in the Swedish "expressional" period. <http://www.klartyp.se>

LEARNING FROM LAS VEGAS By Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour
Brylcrepe published an egg with a great basic design and reported only in a 1988's *Report* used here. Okay, it's about architectural forms, but it's also about graphic design. The first to take the remarkable language of American architecture.

first one? That maybe this is all intentional? There is a steady hail of a lot of questions as graphic designers to justify their existence anyway, and that's only going to get worse. The interesting thing that I've found though, is that students maybe luckily for them, aren't really so much concerned with all this. For the students, the goal of going to school and getting a Masters degree in this is an opportunity to understand what they like and, by doing. Farther through doing it, but especially through understanding what it is they are doing. In this context, good school does have value, but outside of that, the options are very slim. They are growing though. What was happening in mainstream graphic design, versus what is happening today, was very different.

Image: Do you ever feel that graphic design is perhaps not big enough to fully embrace all the ideas and movements that you have talked about during the past hour?

allow. Much of what I've said is based on a frustration with the social position of graphic design, or rather the lack of it. Currently I'm editing some essays on new ways of thinking at the history of graphic design. One of the sections deals with thinking about what the practice of graphic design is, which is usually ignored by historians. Actually, it's ignored by practitioners too. What is the definition of graphic design? In some sense, it comes out of an individual, modern, democratic

graphic design. But we know this graphic design exists in other forms and other kinds of economies and countries, and that may shed some light on where our bourgeoisie design is coming from. Jan van Toorn has talked extensively about the social position of graphic design and how design has been caught in the play of capitalist economies. The essays from a theoretical standpoint, try to explain the functioning of graphic design, and that perhaps is not value in it as much as they could, or should. Robin Kent's in *Eye Magazine* brought up a lot of good commentary wondering why we see so little discussion about information design, and why does it almost have to be flashy, full of color, slick, hip stuff that is slower and more expensive than design pieces I like the most? Kent had some interesting points, particularly regarding how away from Kennedy's eyes are from Paul's eyes. For Kent, if you view it from a certain perspective, then it seems they are very close together.

It is evident that the β factor is important in that it

4.28%

“You know, a great lot of graphic designers that’s done a mere style is the only one, although I don’t want to dismiss style easily, because it’s really important to practicing designers since it’s their one way out of some situations. In a way you can see it as a mode of resistance. It’s a symbolic, almost futile resistance to other factors, but it’s still an important one for them and it does produce effects, social effects, which just can’t be dismissed as design for designers.”

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¹⁰ This usual-variant definition is understood through a simple analogy in which the process is the

we see a giant

connected with the voice process of speech.

Printed by JAMES HARRIS, LONDON

DIANE GORALKA

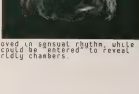


Diane, at, with the Virtual Dervish Virtual Body

dancing with the virtual dervish was a work in virtual environments developed through a two-year residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada. Collaborators Diane Goralka, a designer, Marcos Novak, an architect, and Yacov Sharir, a choreographer developed the original idea of a "book-body" architecture.



one of the iterations presented at the fourth international cyberspace conference. The virtual body included opportunities for individual audience members to interact with the body through an immersive, three-dimensional mode via a head-mounted display at other points during the performance. A dancer explored the environment making it available to the audience as very large video projections in real time. The virtual body was comprised of three-dimensional wire-frame models texture-mapped with x-rays and MRI data of Goralka's body reconfigured and overwritten with typography. The virtual body could be read as a book, inhabited as architecture or moved through as dance. The skeletal spine, ribs, and pelvis moved in sensual rhythm, while the viscera could be entered to reveal other-worldly chambers.



Diane: I should say, honestly, that you have moved into an area that goes way beyond my expertise. I was surprised and impressed to read your resume and see how much you have moved into the multimedia area.

Goralka: Multimedia is such an ugly word isn't it? It's come to refer to pretty much plastic paint-and-ink projects. Let's call it cyberspace. More inclusive. Yeah, I guess it makes me difficult to define.

Diane: For yourself too?

Goralka: Yes, but that doesn't bother me so much—it's just an external definition. People are so ready to put one into convenient boxes. I'm not really sure what to call myself. I'm a designer, I'm a computer artist. I'm a writer, a researcher. There's no one term that encompasses all of that.

Diane: You are not what one would call a multimedia artist then?

Goralka: That's clear, but writing and research isn't covered by that label. Do you still do any traditional professional graphic design work?

Goralka: Sometimes. I'm beginning to collaborate with Mark C. Taylor, a philosopher, on a book about sex faces and the body. It asks what it means, for example, that so many depictions of subcultures wear black get tattoos? It's a philosophical question and it's a visual question too, and I'm not being asked here really don't know what "traditional" graphic design means. Are we talking about American posters, medieval copiers, the Gutenberg press, or designers since the 1960's? The definition has always been a slippery one. Too, I'm really more concerned with what design can be than the status quo. It's important though that before everyone leaps into their trenches that we don't throw the baby out with the bath water. I think the profession needs to have people practicing design traditionally, but there also needs to be room for silver people who do non-entrepreneurial work who join all the fringes to see what's possible.

Diane: That's curious, the word "entrepreneurial" came up in your resume, but for some reason I believe you think of entrepreneurial differently than I do.

Goralka: How do you think of it? Diane: Mostly as understanding something to make a financial profit and not necessarily always something that is culturally or socially beneficial. It could therefore easily have negative connotations, sort of the opposite of anything academic.

Goralka: I know what you do as entrepreneurial Diane: I do, too. I just feel lucky we're able to create something that we actually enjoy doing that is also profitable and has, perhaps, some cultural value.

Diane: As I tell my students, I don't think luck has a lot to do with it. You made a conscious decision to do what you enjoy and to make a living from that commitment, or to make it profitable for yourself on some level.

By entrepreneurial, I refer more to "star-prize," whether it generates monetary profits or not. I mean making room for some designers to create every aspect of a project from its inception, where the designer can function as an author or producer, like Marie Perle and Brecht's Betty Mason Project. I think many times, the profession is so specialized that designers become

more like the one who puts the final coat of paint on a car as it comes off the assembly line. There's room for more than that. I'm trying to straddle that boundary of "real life" and academic research. I'm mostly interested in research and if a project comes with that, then that's great. I recently completed a two-year virtual environments project with the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada—the one The Canadian government funded this project in the range of 20 figures—more money than any academic could expect to get from the NEA—so it was necessary for them to approach the project in an entrepreneurial way. I thought that their approach was really interesting because they looked at six projects created by six teams of collaborative artists, and they co-funded it. R&D (research and development). Many high-tech researchers among others, must invest a great deal in R&D. When you buy a Macintosh, for instance, it only costs a couple of hundred bucks to make, but you're also paying for many people to conduct years of research, some of which never pans out. The Canadian government looked at funding six projects as that type of R&D investment, it was win-win scenario. What they got out of it is the software, the programming the engineers developed for each of the groups, ideas for emerging tools. What the artists got out of it was access to the sorts of technologies and engineering capabilities they couldn't otherwise ever hope to see. A simple but remarkable idea.

Diane: But the NEA funding one of these types of multimedia projects?

Goralka: The NEA simply doesn't have enough funding to undertake projects of such scope. I'm afraid that when I participated in the NEA's Art 21, Art Residency into the 21st Century conference, I found that the NEA is addressing this problem by teaming up with the NSF. The University of Michigan is also putting together a center for interdisciplinary technology-oriented research, seemingly with the Banff Centre. That would mean an artist, who is traditionally underfunded in the U.S., is teaming up with technologists that would otherwise be out of their reach.

Diane: What is the goal of the research?

Goralka: The goal is to find out what is possible in virtual environments, to ask "what if?" in virtual environments, there's a big shift in emphasis from making an art or design object, whether it is a book or sculpture or otherwise, to an audience comes in and views, to creating an interactive environment that relies on a set of possible behaviors. Here the audience becomes an active user, interactor, co-creator. We're not close to developing anything like the Holodeck in Star Trek. It's a simulation room so the viewer disappears where you can download any program you want and walk through it "be immersed." For instance, in a forest in 15th-century France and have characters in that environment interact with you? But why simply replicate reality? The question is "What are the possibilities in terms of development?" These developments are mainly in the hands of engineers and it's time to start other people (poets, artists, etc.). No one offers that opportunity to you on a silver platter, however, you need to find ways to make it happen.

Diane: You started out in traditional graphic design didn't you?

Goralka: I was an English major for years at an undergrad, but my degrees are in graphic design, and I worked in the professional realm for about nine years before I went back to graduate school. What I'm involved in now extends what we conceive of as "traditional" graphic design. Instead of having a book as an object, you will soon be able to access a book, walk through it and interact with it. So that extends the boundaries of design into architecture and movie-making, but also into behavioral of

WE NEED YOUR INPUT FOR OUTPUT.

THE APPLICATIONS OUTPUT WAS ORIGINALLY CONCEPTED BY STUDENTS AT THE FARMER SCHOOL OF ART IN AN EFFORT TO CREATE A **DESIGN EXPERIENCE** USING DESIGN STUDENTS. EACH ISSUE IS GENERATED BY A JUDICIAL PANEL OF ALTERNATING DESIGN PROGRAMS. PREVIOUS ISSUES WERE PRODUCED BY THE FARMER SCHOOL OF ART AND THE CHAMBERLAIN ACADEMY OF ART, WITH A PORTFOLIO ISSUE BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PRODUCING AN ISSUE, PLEASE CONTACT T. DEMLAK AT THE ADDRESS LISTED ON THIS CARD.

THIS ISSUE OF OUTPUT, PUBLISHED BY THE DESIGN PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, IS COMPOSED OF THREE PHASES: THIS SERIES OF **DESIGN EXPERIENCE** TO THREE POSTCARDS (A MAILING BACK THE CARD ON COMMUNICATING ELECTRONICALLY), AND A POST-SCRIPT OF **DESIGN** WHICH WILL BE SENT TO THOSE WHO RESPOND.

PLEASE REFER TO THE BACK OF THIS CARD FOR ELECTRONIC **DESIGN** INSTRUCTIONS.

(STUDENT PROJECTS)

DESIGN EXPERIENCE
POSTCARD AND MAILING BACK THE CARD
ON COMMUNICATING ELECTRONICALLY



Does it bother you
that you are
not reading this
sentence, but
trying to figure
out what font it
is written in?

cognitive science, psychology and programming. The nature of the technologies is interdisciplinary because when you take any information, reduce it to terms and ideas and manipulate it, that really opens up huge areas for exploration. For example, we can take a digital recording of music, write an algorithm, and turn that into a visual. That usability in the digital realm can become really anything. Music can become visual, visuals can become sound, behaviors can enter the outcome of a behavior movie. I view Virtual Reality as taking multimedia to its logical extreme.

The significance for design is that in such nonlinear, interactive environments the designer is concerned with creating a "world" of possible scenarios that depends on attraction. Many designers need to concern themselves not only with visual matters, but behaviors, writers as well, and matters of interface design. How do users know what to do, will they understand the cause-and-effect possibilities of their action? Also epistemological and ontological questions are important. How do these environments change the way we come to know and understand and exist? Susan D. have students who grew up with Nintendo and Macintosh boxes, students who are technologically very sophisticated. How does that experience change them, change how they learn, how they communicate with others?

Issue: How do you teach these ambiguous realities?
Susan: I approach this in two ways almost like a (DNA) double-helix model. One is how to create these worlds and the second, how to understand them. And I bring that to my teaching in a fairly broad way because I found in my own undergraduate education, what was lacking was the question of how to understand design. There were the art history classes, but the connections were greatly remote. In my studies and practice, I've always looked at cultural studies and sociology in an effort to understand design as this a cultural remark and bring that back to my work. Not in a literal way, but in a more synthetic way. For instance, when designers talk about the vernacular, what's often missing from the discussion is that they are actually looking at "the vernacular" as another area for stylistic colonization, as a way of commodifying a certain aspect of our culture. It's necessary to look at how we are part of the whole ideological structure and process of our culture. If the designer is educated with that in mind, it creates a larger awareness. You don't lose that kind of information and directly use it in your design, unless you're designing along the lines of a critical practice like Jean Baudrillard or ACT-up. But I think in creating a broader awareness designers can make more well-informed decisions. What we do affect culture, culture in turn affects how and what we design. That's why I think looking at what other disciplines may offer us can be valuable. Obviously you can't just a designer to be a sociologist and a cultural critic and an artist and everything else, but we can collaborate with experts in those fields. It also has to do with the way design is taught. Perhaps not now, but certainly when I was a student, the term was primarily on the designers' intentions. So you create your work and you put it out there, but we don't really study what happens afterwards. Other disciplines can

offer more systematic studies or a different way of approaching how to study the results.
Issue: How does Output fit into your teaching of design?
Susan: When we received, let's call it the "Output challenge," where each school would produce some kind of vehicle for discussion, my students were really interested in creating something that would generate more immediate feedback than a journal could offer. They sent out a series of postcards that were meant to provoke a discussion rather than the request writing back on the postcard, used as by connecting using e-mail. The students created an International Relay Chat channel where they could communicate with other students in real-time, using computers. What we found was that many graphic designers didn't have access to the Net at that time. However, since Internet is free for students to use, my students did hook up with many others in the areas of architecture, engineering, philosophy, and English who were dealing with the same questions. Also, the communication was primarily with students from other countries. It seemed that the motivation for communication with students in other countries was much more enthusiastic. So they were talking to students in China, Peru, Israel, Sweden, and England, among other places.

Issue: What were the more valuable lessons learned from the Output project?
Susan: Each postcard consisted of a question each student developed. The first lesson we learned was that students were shy about, and had difficulty in coming up with, questions and issues for discussion. I attribute some of this to their years in an educational system that often results in what I term "the baby bird syndrome," where students wait to be spoon-fed information. We need to expect a lot more from students, and to try to relinquish some of the creativity that the system breeds out of all of us at an early age, to encourage students to take charge of their future, to not be wholly dependent on teachers or bosses or parents.

One of the interesting things about Output is that two of my students developed BOTS, which is short for robot. The BOTS represented certain personalities on the Net, which seemed as artificial intelligence, on a modest scale, of which the user may not be aware - although you could guess that "El Lobotomy" was not a real person. If they asked El Lobotomy a question, there was a series of responses programmed to function as his "personality." So they were speaking to this artificial intelligence that could actually respond to anyone else on the Net, and had an historical perspective. The trick for the students was to come up with the greatest number and types of questions that someone might ask El Lobotomy and then program in a series of responses. What was interesting was that when students discovered that they were indeed talking to a BOT, it didn't matter that it wasn't a real person, they continued their discussion anyway. They also created a poster, which is a sort of library of access points to specific information. **Issue: We have our own bulletin board on which we post various types of information and promotional material and people can ask us questions and have discussions. There are definite advantages to the medium, but so terms of communicating with people I find it the most aggravating of all means of communication. It is very easy for people to sit down and off the top of their head put questions onto your network that they expect an immediate answer to. My experience is that the bulk of e-mail messages is very discombobulated and impulse-oriented, as opposed to let's say a letter, which the reader needs to put in a bit of an effort to write and actually mail. In a sense, e-mail is as informal as a telephone call, yet people seem to forget that it's as formal as a letter, since it's recorded and it's posted for everybody to**

son. We try to keep up with answering our regular mail, our incoming faxes and now we have to start answering e-mail as well. But I never seem to be able to get a handle on e-mail because people just ramble. Have you noticed that?

Anna: Definitely—I get about five hundred and fifty messages a day. But it's like anything else. Too simply have to filter on the relevance that you're not interested in. Or junk mail, or like having a receptionist answer the phone. Educationally I try to address it by having students receive the phenomenon. The instantaneous communication is great. But, as you said, the negative aspect is that it is often not well thought out. So I have them sit down and concentrate on what they're saying and why.

Jason: What do the students learn when they're on Internet?

Anna: Besides library research, which students are on the Net particularly is real-time, their behavior and questions change. They directly communicate with others, and start the Net based on their own interests. Also, they learn an communication and behaviors that aren't possible in print. For example, the most popular International Relay Chat channel my students use is Net Jay, a form of safe sex. If you will. The first thing most of them will do is to switch gender, which is interesting for the first day or two, but then they soon find out how difficult it is to seriously switch your gender and how people can figure out very quickly whether you're male or female through your questions and answers. They soon realize gender isn't just a costume, that it's the result of many years of cultural conditioning. It's definitely a new medium for expression and expression.

Jason: How do you use this as an entrepreneurial way? There's a potentially huge audience that everybody has access to and it's fairly easy to use.

Anna: The most basic use is for research. You can log on and get information from the Library of Congress in a matter of seconds. Then there are the MOOs and MUDs, which are multiuser domains that have a bit of artificial intelligence. For instance, you might have a conceptual space constructed like a building or a spaceship or whatever, and students can log on and decide on what character and what kinds of attributes they'll have. Then they can explore the space and speak to people or things they meet. In MOOs and MUDs or other virtual environments, the environment changes based on where you are and how you interact. There are characters and/or objects who speak to you or get in your way or feed you or other characters or places in a virtual environment. Let's say you're walking through space and you can see it and you can see other people who are in that space. They can respond to you whether there's another person hooked up to that character or whether it's a BOF. You can also implant sound or music, so if you approach a certain area, you can trigger a musical event to happen. Most of these multiple-user programs are text-based, but some, like Habitat, are graphically based.

What's useful for students is that we use those experiences as a way to look at design. How would you construct that space and how would it be different because it is responsive? Where you design a hypertext book, which is not linear, that hypertext

book responds directly to your queries. How do you design with interactivity in mind? How does that change your design process? Megan: I'm sitting here behind my computer, listening to you, and my computer isn't half as sophisticated as the computers you need to do what you are describing, yet I can't even make full use of the computer I have. How important is it going to be for artists as designers who will work in these media to be technically skilled to such a point where they can craft out the most out of the extremely sophisticated technology that is being developed today?

Anna: It's a matter of balance. I don't think you can effectively design technologically based work without knowledge in and experience with that technology, and with a working knowledge of other media. On the other hand, it is unrealistic to think that every designer will be trained as a designer and as a programmer, musician, writer, and film producer. That's why collaboration is important. For example, with our project at Bantell, at the interdisciplinary courses I teach, a designer will team up with an engineer, an English major or someone from communications. These participants have different skill beyond what any one person could have. But if they're able to communicate with people from other disciplines, then they have an enormous range of expertise and potential. Let me emphasize though, that it's not enough to be a designer, a draftsman, a collaborator, it is important to be grounded in some knowledge base in discipline, then to open yourself to learn from others' expertise. When it works there is nothing like it. When it doesn't, there's nothing worse.

Jason: Graphic design grew out of the profession of printing as a specialization. It separated itself from the actual physical production of graphic design for a variety of reasons, although mostly economical. In the process, graphic designers saw other creative products that are unaccountably expensive and/or wasteful due to a lack of knowledge of production processes. Now, with the advent of multimedia and the increased complexity of the tools, designers will become further and further removed from the very tools that they rely on to create the kind of work they envision they would want to do. Instead of working with and relying on programmers and engineers, wouldn't it make more sense for students to learn those trades first, before worrying about the cultural implications of their work and sociology studies and philosophy?

Anna: Well, let's look at a continuum. On one end, we have what exists now, desktop publishing. This technology changes the process of design, and in this case, the designers aren't further removed from their tools. If they design primarily with a computer. This is even more true if the work is intended to exist only on screen. On the other end of the continuum, let's look at what I'd barely there, virtual environments. The technology here is so sophisticated that it takes extraordinary expertise to use it, let alone create with it. One needs to collaborate with programmers and engineers. Yes, then designers are more removed from their tools, but it's also a film producer or director. There will be the same award, but few directors and producers find funding, operate the camera, plug in the lights, write the music, art, edit, and create the marketing. They orchestrate all of that but don't actually do all of it.

Megan: But isn't this like creating carpenters who don't know how to drive a nail and join wood but who have a conceptual idea of how it could be done?

Anna: Yes! This is like the criticism educators tend to get from practitioners, that the broader issues of thinking about design are somehow superfluous. If that is so, then let's use machines instead of humans. They want students to be able to hit the floor running without the need for mere training. I can see some of it from their point of view; it's a cost-benefit issue. It costs them money to train designers. But look, what's the difference between a high

"As educators, we invest a lot of time in teaching these interdisciplinary courses, sometimes teaching them as additional courses, without additional pay, but we're not heroes, we do it because it is enthralling. The students are among the best and brightest, terribly driven and experimental. It's really a privilege to be part of it. It's my secret desire to teach in a Montessori school for grown-ups, where you would have a group of students who are self-motivated and self-directed."

As an educator, and this may sound heretical, I become a facilitator, rather than some removed expert, talking down to students who are enticed in depths called to the floor.

David Schwartz



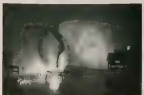
COURTESY FA 581: VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENTS, CROSSFACE, AND THE ARTS

The Division of Art Studies at Austin
University, Susan Orlovich and Peter Borer

PROJECT TWO: FURNING CHAIRS: TECHNOLOGICALS OF THE VIRTUAL BODY

Lecturers: Susan Orlovich, Art & Society
Practitioners: Amanda Borer, Design Center
Peter Borer, Media & Society

described as "A ritual of humanity, technology, and technology, the fucking chair is a fantastic apparatus, an exploration of the concept of interface, in eréndia laurel's words. The interface is the thing that we communicate with - the thing we talk to - the thing that mediates between us and the inner workings of the machine. The fucking chair was conceived in its initial stages to be a work of conceptual and performance art, a blueprint for both legislation and actualization - design that asks questions. The user is wired for both input and output (forced feedback) and is able to interact with herself, another user, or multiple users. Medical equipment monitors biofeedback of temperature, pulse, skin humidity, reflexes and so forth and is fed as data into a computer which processes it through a sex-gorilla, an algorithm that can be set to produce different modes of stimulation. These include tactile and nervous stimulation through a series of low-intensity, electrical impulses, hot air flow, massaging action of the pad surface, and immersion in triggered visuals. Ideally, the fucking chair is a conceptual vehicle for the expression of divergent sexualities and a site for continual, interactive, multi-sensory exploration. The underlying principle is that there is no one ideal for human fantasy or erotica."



school graduate who works as a desktop publisher at Epsilon and learns Quark Xpress from the manual, and a designer who gets an undergraduate education? There should be some difference. Yes, the design grad should absolutely have some working knowledge of the design and production processes, and they should be able to think. The trouble is finding a balance in the short amount of time we have in school. I strive to teach them real skills, but also how to think, how to learn on their terms, how to adapt. New technologies will change significantly in the future, designers need to be able to stretch and cope with that. It's like the PDS tag, "Learning is personal, journey, knowledge a lifelong quest." The word "intellectual" has very negative

connotations in this country, as if effective skills and broader intelligence can't exist in one person. I don't like that. Some of the most intelligent and creative people I know in Austin are professors, but also a postal clerk, a taxi driver, and a gay who sells used cowboy boots. They are extremely effective in what they do, they view it as an art, as a 24/7 approach to life. They don't rush home after the five o'clock fluorescent lights to drink beer and watch tv to numb themselves to a job they despise. They worry about the cultural implications of their work, but they also have a great time doing it later. When you think about undergraduate design students, and you look at the profusion of graphic design, which has a future that is literally wide open, what do you teach the students? What do you focus on when you don't really know where the profession is heading?

Crossin: It's really important to address the open-endedness of the field. What I try to provide is an intellectual and conceptual framework, a flexible framework that students can build on and bring their stuff to. The design field has changed radically in the last ten years, and it will keep changing as an accelerated pace in a lot to the students' benefit to only learn how to drive an actual nail with an actual hammer, or to adopt one simplistic approach. They need grounding in historical perspectives, practice in differing methodologies, experience with technology. They need to know how to read and write in effectively communicate with others. They need to develop visual acuity to develop ways to synthesize information and use it to design effectively. **Design: Would you still teach them how to set lead type?**

Crossin: Sure. We call our lab the New and Ancient Technologies University Research (NATURE) Lab just as television didn't render radio obsolete, as was predicted, print will still exist side-by-side with design that exists only on screen. Students still need a real expertise, technology doesn't change that. They need to know how visuals function, and the differences between material and let's call it "immaterial" design. But they need a considerable amount of other information as well.

Design: How do you do all this? You have them for only three or four years.

Crossin: It's a big problem. Realistically we only get them for three years and not all of their attention is focused on design classes. You need to provide them with as much as you can during that time. What I do is a kind of two step approach. One is to provide them with the visual expertise

skill, and understanding that's necessary, but also provide them with a much broader framework. Therefore the interdisciplinary courses are extremely valuable, because when you put students in a situation where they have to create actual projects together with a group of students from other disciplines, their horizons expand enormously. This is because they haven't thought in those other modes before. Usually, they have one idea of what design is, not what it can be. Time is a problem, a big problem, but there are ways to address that. Take two years of plasma studies. While this is valuable, it is possible to achieve the same goals by reconfiguring classes and projects. For instance I'd do away with the "studio" and three dimensional design courses and integrate the plasma into three design courses, into projects that have some context that aren't exclusively formalistic studies.

Design: What do the students come to the program at UT for?

Crossin: To gain an understanding of how the profession exists now. But they're also interested in what the profession could be and it's a scary but also exhilarating place to be. There are some students who are attracted to it because, let's say, they have an interest in digital film or video, and they're not exactly sure what sort of jobs or projects they could do once they graduate. The interdisciplinary courses attract students who want to take risks who are interested in what the future can be, and are interested in shaping it - that takes a pretty extraordinary undergraduate focus. There aren't many people teaching this, are there?

Crossin: I know people are teaching multimedia courses and I know some programs that are addressing new technologies within design curricula, but I'm not sure how many are teaching it as cross-listed, interdisciplinary courses. It is addressed as an undergraduate level in a fundamental way. Perhaps not yet. We're all struggling to come to terms with it now. What's the biggest obstacle? You can't get the funding for the equipment?

Crossin: That's one of the problems. Another problem is simply that it's been created even as we speak, so there are not decades of history to lean on or depend on. Also, currently institutions like universities do not have structures that can easily adapt to interdisciplinary degree programs. There is a lot of rhetoric, not as much investment or results.

Design: So what would you suggest to someone, a young person, who reads *Wired* magazine and who has an interest in graphic design? What would such a person do at this point in order to increase their opportunity to land a job if they don't want to work in the academic environment or go to graduate school?

Crossin: One approach is to get a real fundamental education in design. When I say design, I think of it in the broadest term. For example, in our curriculum at the University of Texas, we are really striving to come up with a Design program, no jargon, just focus on "creativity" or "industrial" design disciplines. Sooner more on issues and questions that could advance our form. Some curricula have multimedia components. Students can augment that with courses in, let's say, Computer Science or Communications. Many disciplines offer related courses.

How at UT, there's a group of students who are graphic designers, architects, English majors and radio, television and film majors who are extraordinarily self-motivated and find ways of getting what they need from the University. A true interdisciplinary multimedia major doesn't exist for these self-labeled cyberpunks, but they take courses from Victor Shinar (a choreographer) and me in the College of Fine Arts, from Sandy Stone in Communications from John Slater in English, and so on. That's a really exciting

expert of technology for me as an educator because both the industry and the students are having a greater impact on postsecondary education to respond. These students say "Well, if there isn't a major that exists, we'll make our own." It's taken an extraordinary and innovative student to do that, but they're out there, and it happens at the undergraduate level.

As educators, we invest a lot of time in teaching these interdisciplinary courses, sometimes teaching them as additional courses without additional pay. But we're not heroes, we do it because it is exhilarating. The students are among the best and brightest, incredibly driven and experimental. It's a really a privilege to be part of it. It's my secret desire to teach in a

Mozartian school for grown-ups where you would have a group of students who are self-motivated and self-directed. As an educator, and this may sound heretical, I become a facilitator rather than some renowned expert, talking down to students who are encased in ideas nailed to the floor. Some of these students have a technological sophistication far beyond mine. What I can offer as a facilitator are ways for them to find common ground with students from other disciplines to collaborate on design projects, meet and find equipment in laboratory institutions, to synthesize radically different types of information to put in perspective. **Design:** How big a role do simple formal issues of design play within your design curriculum? And how big an influence does the computer have on these issues?

Gross: There is so much discussion about computers and training designers and the evils of that. Computers are neither good nor bad, they simply are. It's what people do with them that counts. I take my sophomores and have them immediately become very facile with technology with the hopes that it will become just another tool, another medium. The problem, of course, is that formal issues become less important because they rely on the computer to make too many decisions for them, when they should be making those based on visual criteria. But it's up to the educator to make sure that the balance remains in balance. What happens with my students, which is really critical, is that the more involved they become with designing completely as a computer, the more they get alienated with the material aspects of design. My colleague Randa Sweener first noticed this. It's a good sign though, because it means they stop seeing the computer as an end in itself, as the only option.

Design: Let's change subjects for a second. Do you think the information superhighway will be simply another route accommodating multinational to infiltrate our lives, or is there really room there

for individuals to do things that before were not possible?

Gross: Right. Most importantly, it will change the way we think and do things. I try to address those questions of how you come to know and be in this shared method of working, this other space. Students, and people in general, are pretty smart and adaptable. As soon as, let's say, Internet starts becoming profit-oriented, you can count on a large group of people who will come up with another move to democratize it again. Of course, I'm talking as a white, middle-class American. Maybe a more pertinent question is will the information superhighway, a road of cyberspace, infiltrate all of our lives, or create a greater divide between the haves and the have nots?

Design: You are leaving UT and you're going to the University of Washington in Seattle. What is there that made you want to leave Texas?

Gross: Besides the coffee? There are a couple of reasons. One is that I'll be teaching in the School of Communications. They wanted someone who could bring a visual experience and provide that to students who were going to go into mass communications like radio and television. They found that the questions I deal with are the same questions they are in it. In that respect design is now a separate discipline. It's for teaching interdisciplinary courses in interface design, visual literacy, and new media. I'll also be directing their New Media Research Lab, which was another attraction. So I'll have students from design, art, engineering, and communications and stuff for my lab. It's my dream job. **Design:** So you go where the technology is?

Gross: Right - a technological demand. I think it's necessary at the present because the funding of technology in institutions is right now - usually an inequitable relationship between the long-term, bureaucratic structure of most institutions and the rapid change of technology. Another attraction is the excitement in Seattle. Microsoft is there, a community of support on a large cultural scale. I don't like to teach in a room where there's no vacuum. I think it is important for students to relate what they learn to a "real" world, and Seattle seems

to be a fertile, if not prurient one. And I love the attitude in the Pacific Northwest. It's home. There is still a "dream west," pioneer kangaroo you there's a definite and sensible "laissez-faire" attitude - yes do your thing, I'll do mine.

Design: Are you a geek?

Gross: Ah! A geek? It's interesting now being that up because being a female in technology is a virtual reality in and of itself. I'm not a geek in so many words - there's not even a decent female geek stereotype - but I've always been around technology and an interested in it for it's evolutionary potential and looking at how it affects our culture. I'm with Donna Haraway when she writes in *A Man/Text for Cyborgs*,

"Am I a geek? No. It's interesting now being that up because being a female in technology is a virtual reality in and of itself."

Donna Haraway

LEAVE GROSS'S TOP FIVE MUST READ BOOKS

(plus)

A HANDBOOK FOR CHANGING AND THE PRACTICES OF MONITORING BY JAMES HARRISON

PARADOXES OF VERY INTELLIGENCE: DESIGN

THE THEORY OF COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONS BY JOHN BOWEN

THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION

AND ARTISTS BY FREDERICK BY WALTER BENJAMIN

NECESSITY OF THE CLASS BY PIERRE

PIRE

PROFOUNDNESS: THE EXTENSION OF MAN BY HERBERT AUBURN

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CULTURE IN POSTMODERN CULTURE BY THE CULTURE OF

DESIGN: CONCEPTS BY PIERRE BOURDIEAU

FRANCIS WATSON BY JAMES HARRISON

PARADOXES OF VERY INTELLIGENCE: DESIGN

"I'd rather be a cyborg than a goddess."

[cso]



MICHAEL ROCK



LEFT: MIKE ROCK. RIGHT: OSCAR SCHLEMMER'S DANCE OF THE BAUHAUS. BOTTOM: OSCAR SCHLEMMER'S DANCE OF THE BAUHAUS. BOTTOM: OSCAR SCHLEMMER'S DANCE OF THE BAUHAUS.

from Maybe we can start by talking about your background in graphic design.

Michael I studied literature as an undergraduate student at Boston College in suburban New York, outside Albany. My undergraduate thesis paper was on the importance of space in Modernist painting and, in particular, the linguistic nature of line length and the shape of the poem on the page.

At the same time, I was working on a master in painting with Anne Sullivan and I was also really influenced by a guy named Michael Bellaria, who was a music professor. He was directing a series of sound compositions, including Schlemmer's *Uroboros* and an Italian performance piece called *Sciclic*.

Sciclic is a spoken word composition for seven voices, based on the aesthetic principles of Walter Brecht and Renato Poggioli. It was all a very late twentieth-century kind of thing performed by three men and three women and a child in which I spoke one part. The music of the performance came out of these simultaneous voices with words and phrases created not by one voice but several voices together.

Through my interest in concrete poetry, Brechtman introduced me to the work of Tom O'Connor at RISD. Tom has a long background as a concrete poet going back to the thirties. I really liked his work so I went down to RISD for a summer class that Tom was teaching. It was then I became interested in how I could combine both my minor and major through graphic design. RISD had a three-year program. The last year you did preliminary work and then applied to the graduate program after that, which I did. At the time I never really thought that I was going to become a professional graphic designer. That was never my goal.

Inspire: Did you become one?
Michael Well, I did after I graduated. I started out with a purely academic interest in design and then, as I was working, I became quite interested in design as a profession. But I realized that I didn't know what professional design was all about.

Inspire: What was your thesis about at RISD?

Michael At the time, Mihai Nadin, the Romanian architect, was teaching at RISD with a joint appointment between the Design and Liberal Arts departments.

That's when I became interested in semantics. I did a fairly academic thesis on *periphrasis*, based on the idea that when you change the point of view by which something is represented, the meaning of that object changes. The meaning of an object is changed in its manner of representation. Nadin was a great advisor.

He also came out of an academic and literary background so there was a connection. I learned a lot from him but I'm still working on my thesis and hope to have it finished any day now.

Inspire: But after graduating you got involved with graphic design in the real world?

Michael I did a couple of different things. I worked during and immediately after school with Debra McCall in NYC. She was a choreographer and at the time she was working on the reconstruction of Oskar Schlemmer's Bauhaus dances. I did graphic design for

her and also worked on the set design and construction. That was an incredible experience, and I've kept an association with her ever since. In fact, she has just returned the dances to the Denzou Bushan stage for the first time in fifty years. It played there in March.

After graduating I got a job in the Design department at Wang, a big computer company based outside of Boston. It was a full-time job doing all sorts of collateral material, right at the beginning of the Bos when computer companies were surging.

Wang had decided they wanted to have an in-house Design department so they hired Hugh Dubberly as the new art director, who was about two years out of grad school at Yale.

Hugh hired about a dozen people, most of whom had just graduated, mostly RISD and Yale, and they gave us a great studio and facilities with a huge photo studio and lots of space. It was a fantastic experience and I learned a lot from all my colleagues there.

I think we were all pretty excited about the possibilities of corporate design programs back then. But a year after I got there the big computer depression set in and Wang slowly went out of business and the entire Design department was laid off or reassigned one by one. So there I was, without a job, but with a nice severance plan from Wang. I was freelancing back in Providence at the time and then Tom O'Connor asked if I would teach a class at RISD.

I began teaching a typography class at night and I had taken a job as a senior designer at Shepard Associates in Boston.

Then Tom invited me to teach what amounts to the semester class at RISD, the design theory classes called *Visible Language*, which was required for juniors. I taught that, two classes a term, both on the same day, for the next six or seven years while working full time in Boston. When I left

RISD after a few years, I started my own business with a classroom of mine, Francis Anselmi. This was in Boston and was called *Art & Information Incorporated*. We had that studio for about three years when I got an offer to teach full time at Yale. I met

Shirley de Bonteville and really liked her. I had never taught full time before but I was beginning to write again and I thought I'd try it out. I was interested in what was going on in design at Yale. Shirley had just taken over the Design department so it seemed like the best time to be there, right when something was starting.

We had worked hard on our business and it actually had just started taking off, but I was also looking for a break from the rigors of the profession. My partner, Susan Bellera, had been working in Amsterdam for a year and had just come back to the States and was about to start graduate school in American Studies. She had gotten into the program at Yale, which was a nice coincidence. So suddenly we found ourselves moving to New Haven.

Inspire: This is a full-time position. Does that mean you teach every day?

Michael No. Teaching is not the real life, but it does take a lot of time. Full-time is three days a week, but you have a lot of other things going on all the time. I teach one undergraduate class and the rest of the time I do mostly thesis advising and a graduate seminar, which is basically a reading class on critical issues.

Inspire: What exactly is it that made you decide to go back into teaching? Was it that the professional work didn't live up to what you had hoped it would be, or was it just a new position for teaching?

Michael It's not that the professional work didn't fulfill what I wanted it to be, but when I started teaching I realized I was good at it and that I enjoyed it. I never really thought that I was going to be a professor, just as I had never thought I'd ever be a professional graphic designer. It was just chance that I started doing it.

Inspire: Why do you think you're a good



Oskar Schlemmer's DANCES OF THE BAUHAUS. Designed by Oskar Schlemmer and Hans Holm.



New American Wave Book: *Photomontage, Layout*
Designed by Robert Ryan and Susan Hurley



New American Wave Book: *Photomontage, Layout*
Designed by Robert Ryan and Susan Hurley

teacher?

Michael: Let's go back to that question in a second, okay? Because that comes after how I got into it. I started doing it and enjoyed doing it and I learned a lot more about graphic design by teaching it, in a different way, than I was learning about it from working in the field professionally. Especially when we started our own business, I found the professional aspects of graphic design, the idea of running your own studio really intriguing, especially trying to establish a certain atmosphere in our studio as an employer. But, also, I am a little bit interested in a lot of the circumstances that happen when you work for other people. One of the things that teaching, especially since I've been teaching full time, has

allowed me, is that I can be a lot more selective about the kind of professional things that I do. Teaching has afforded me a kind of life-style that enables me to pursue a wider range of activities.

Leslie: You mean you can turn jobs down because you have the security of an income through teaching?

Michael: Yes, that, and we can work on very specific kinds of projects. It used to be that we'd always be doing six projects at once, but professional jobs don't always allow for a lot of depth or contemplation. Now, Susan and I are both working as one or two projects at a time and we can put a lot of effort into each project. And I needed that because I was getting really scattered. So it has actually allowed me to focus as my design again, in a funny kind of way, because I think since I haven't been designing very much, I design a lot better. But I guess because I can pick the jobs and have to worry less about being able to afford the overhead. But also because now we work much more directly as researchers, writing and making visually. It's a very academic pursuit, in a way. And teaching forced me to contemplate what design is really about and how it works.

Leslie: What is design really about? **Michael:** One of the things I've always felt about design education in general is that it never addresses that question. We tell our students a lot about how to make things in a certain way, but there is very little discussion, especially in undergraduate classes, about how design really fits into the culture. We want to focus on how design and communication in general fit into the local world as a form of cultural production, not just a professional activity. When I talk about introducing "social issues" into design education, I am not talking about abortion rights or ecology or saving the whales. I am not talking about do-gooding. If we talk about the social issues of graphic design, it's about the mass-produced communication fits into creating political positions, consumer attitudes and class distinctions. Those are important

things to understand for any designer working or running a business and selling work and deciding what work to work doing. In addition, being part of a university, there are certain ideas that are important to the visual culture in general and we think that students should get information about these while they're here. Although graduates are different from undergraduates, in undergraduate studies, it's our responsibility to not get so bogged down with the theoretical. There are certain skills and abilities that we want the students to have. It's important to us that

they can go out and get a job. In graduate school most of the students already have had an undergraduate design education or have been working for a while. They are coming back for a broader, deeper understanding.

Leslie: But in general you feel that designers are not sufficiently aware of how their work fits into culture?

Michael: Yes. We tend to educate students in a very narrow way. We have trained people to be incredibly concerned about the slowness of the activity of the graphic design profession and I think that's why designers tend to design for their peers, they're the only audience that can respond to their work. We, as design educators have ignored the importance of understanding process in a broader sense. We don't discuss where the esthetic and formal languages we're utilizing came from, nor how they came to be accepted as being normative or tasteful. I feel that it's important that if you are going to do something in your profession, you have an idea of how that fits into the culture that you live in. Otherwise, you're just promoting that strange isolated activity of trying to convince someone that this has to be the answer for a particular job without understanding the cultural connections.

Leslie: But to what degree do you have to know as a designer, or to what degree do you have to teach your students, how design fits into culture? How much cultural meaning does a typeface such as Garamond carry with it?

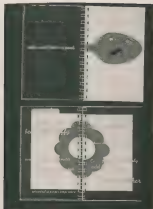
Michael: I don't think it has to dominate the curriculum and it certainly shouldn't supplant the need for skills-oriented classes. At RIT, Visible Language was only one class out of over twenty. But at some point, there should be a discussion going on about the implications of the designer's work. **Leslie:** When you design yourself, are you aware of that? Do you question and ask yourself how will this particular piece fit into culture?

Michael: I think I do, and I'm sure you do too. Even on a basic level, when you decide, for instance, that for a particular job you're going to be cynical, you're making cultural decisions and you're making an assumption about your audience and about what they like and how they respond to something and how much they understand. It is the basic aspect of design. It is basic to the whole design process that you're making these decisions all the time. **Leslie:** What then is the difference between making design decisions based on cultural concerns and marketing?

Michael: I think these ideas are incorporated in marketing. My feeling is that when advertising and market are made all the money is placed ads instead of making the art work, that their interest is in getting in other words how their work achieves a certain result, which is where they make their money, whereas graphic designers make their living by crafting the actual object itself. We designers are more concerned with the physical attributes of the object, not the integration of that object in a larger process. Therefore I place our interest in the work in a different way than advertisers place their interest in the work. Although there is an important part of marketing—how you think about audience, how people would actually use something that you made—that's a really important part of design. It's always implicit in design.

Leslie: How can you ever have a complete picture of an audience? You know as well as I do that any audience is diverse. Even if you do something very specific, let's say a poster for a ballet, the only thing the audience has in common is that they all like the ballet, but they are still a very diverse audience. So do you use a classical or a modern typeface?

Michael: The thing is, you can look at it from the other side also, which is that you're form audiences. Emigre is a good example. You produce your magazine, and as you



Yale Arts School
Project: Chair and Table

coming from a career in industrial design, she worked to join her three- and four-dimensional skills as well as develop her writing. Her project involved the design of a collection of chairs and mirrors around the theme of women and seating, women and eating. Her chairs each evoked a certain suburban standard - the lazy boy, the folding lawn chair, the dinette set - and incorporated both type and materials that subtly reconsidered the meaning of these forms. The beach chair on the grass mound made from stretched girdles, the interwoven lattice of the lawn chairs printed with a dysfunctional dialogue, a kitchen chair with a cushion of real butter, etc. In addition may composed an accompanying text for each piece which is contained in the project documentation catalog.



Inter: Exactly, but we never took into consideration a particular audience when we started out. We never projected what we are doing and figured how that would fit into the culture at large. We sort of started out trying to please ourselves.

Monet: Well, you can never really say that you know exactly who the audience is, most of the time you don't. That usually is some kind of designer's rhetoric to help sell their work. But it's valuable to think about how your work is useful, and how it plays in a certain kind of group who might use it. You not only have to ask yourself "to this audience addressing an audience," but also "Why a poster?" What does a poster mean? Even - But only through hindsight can you see whether your choices were successful and find out how the audience reacted to it.

Inter: Sometimes you can do it ahead of time. When you design for an audience, you can make certain assumptions about that audience and you can design for that audience very specifically because you know they're going to share a certain physical disability, understand a certain cultural reference, appreciate a certain form, accept a certain level of ambiguity. There's a lot of different levels in which you can make assumptions about who's going to use your work. For instance, one of the projects we are working on here at Yale is designing an informational interface for a book in the lobby of one of the neighborhood clinics in New Haven. We can make certain assumptions about their audience because we know who goes to the clinic. We know, for instance, that a large majority of them but very low literacy, which allows us to make certain decisions about what we can and cannot do, about what form would be the most compelling and attractive. Inter: But that type of analysis of a design problem is something we've been teaching design students for the past few years? You're not saying this has been neglected in design education?

Monet: I am saying that it has been neglected in design education. Again, we tend to focus on product and not processes. I think most design problems are still based on the idea design a logo, design a poster, design a CD package. Obviously this is important to have students deal with the formal issues that have to be handled in these narrow parameters, and get a sense of professional practice. But we don't deal with the other cultural and historical issues that surround the practice of design. How does the visual language of logos relate the authority of corporations? How does consistency as a design principle lead to homogeneity? How does multiculturalism obscure the possibilities of a universal design language? How does design historiography reinforce certain political agendas? How do ideas of quality and craftsmanship come to imply class distinctions? These

are questions that should be addressed and debated in graphic design graduate programs.

Inter: Yale has both an undergrad and a grad program, right?

Monet: Yes. The undergraduate program, however, is small. It's not exactly a program because Yale is adverse to any kind of pre-professional training. The college that is the undergraduate part of the university has a strong commitment to providing a liberal arts education. You can major in art but you can't major in graphic design. You can major in art with a

concentration in graphic design, which may mean that you'd take four or five graphic design classes. It wouldn't be the equivalent of going to an art school in short numbers of classes.

Inter: What do these undergraduates do once they graduate?

Monet: Most of them go to work as graphic designers. The good ones do and the other ones do something related. In the past, some really successful people have come out of the undergraduate design program and others have gone on to graduate school. Of my undergraduates this year and last, one just received a Fulbright to continue his studies at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, another is doing animation at WGBH in Boston, and a third is a book designer at a big publisher in New York. While they haven't had that many design classes, all of them are smart and well-read, which will serve them well in the profession.

Inter: What do the graduate students want to learn, what do they come to Yale for and what do they use themselves do once they graduate?

Monet: We get a very diverse range of students, so it's difficult to answer for every one of them. Some people are coming with ten or fifteen years of experience in the field and they come to Yale to de-program and realize their design lives. For some reason they got going in a direction they didn't particularly care for, or they felt they weren't getting much out of the field anymore and they came back to try and find something else, to try and understand what they've been doing and maybe rethink what their position in the profession is.

Inter: Does that work? Or, by allowing themselves two years of complete freedom, is the reality of reentering the commercial world simply going to be an even bigger disappointment?

Monet: For a lot of people it really changes what they do and for some it changes who they are. But you'd have to talk to some of them to see how well it works for them. Also, it's not absolute freedom either because the nature of the University and this program is such that there is some fairly structured aspects about the things we do here. Anyway, that's one type. Then you have people who have had quite a number years of experience but felt that in their undergraduate programs they didn't get fully educated. Or, perhaps they feel they're weak in a certain area and it's not being helped by working professionally. Or, for instance, they want to learn more about the history of design or learn to write better and know about design that way. Or they are coming back because they feel they simply want to continue their education. Then we also have a program, a three-year graphic design program for people who were very good students at very good schools and who majored in related fields like fine art, or art history or architecture. Because they never had the formal education in graphic design, these people go through a preliminary year, which is an incredibly stringent formal program, and then, an accelerated completion, they go into the regular two-year program.

Inter: How do you talk to people who have such a variety of backgrounds?

Monet: Well, in a very individual way. There's a lot of one-on-one, and that's the only way you can do it. The diversity is great, but it's a problem having any kind of consistency. We focus on collaborative projects, which works well when you have such a range of abilities. Students also have to take academic classes while doing their design studies. And the academic classes profoundly influence how they think and talk about design, probably much more than anything we do. The professors in art history, literary studies, architecture, film, cultural studies, or whatever, are influencing the way the students think. So the

terly it is very important that they're not getting literary theory through the filter of a graphic designer. If they're interested in French literary theory, they're going to someone who might be one of the top people working in that field and that's where they'll be getting it from. If they're interested in Deconstruction, they're going to people who specialize in that. It helps to keep at bay adopting particular languages in a superficial way, or worse, as a form of education rather than ransification. One of Sheila's worries, which I share, is that sometimes designers pick up theory third and fourth hand. We've tried to avoid that. I try to be a nexus between design studies and the academic classes, pointing students to places they can get useful information.

Is it somewhat familiar with Lisa Johnson's *Pinell* project and I was told by an eyewitness to the actual physical manifestation of her project had something to do with a treble and view. Perhaps I should ask her about this but —

Wah. Yes, perhaps you should, as it is really not fair to trivialize someone's work through an off-hand comment from an outside "eyewitness," but I could sort of explain a little bit about the graduate exhibition and what it is about. The work in the exhibit was intended to communicate the essence of the students' work and research over the course of the year or three years here. So Lisa's project was sort of an installation/manifestation of the literally hundreds of responses to retail. Our Internet news group and all the discussion surrounding it. She was trying to show how you could present all these different bits of interrelated information. Her work also included a CD-ROM. Up in the network to respond right there, a substantial menu was, and annotated bibliography, never at other book projects and stuff. From a video project all on the same theme. But you should definitely talk to her about getting more information on the project. **Is there a project like that, ultimately, have to do with graphic design? Or is that an irrelevant question?**

Wah. No, it's not irrelevant at all. Although I always find it fascinating how professional designers are so keen on maintaining strict boundaries between what is and isn't graphic design. I think it's very relevant and it's an issue that all graduate programs have to constantly confront. I mean, how far from the true do you want to let things fall? That's something anyone in any program is considering. You have two contradictory goals. One is that you want to prepare people to be graphic designers, but you don't necessarily want to just mirror professional practice because the school should be questioning, expanding and rethinking what design is and what role the designer should play. In addition

what it is exactly that a graphic designer does is in tremendous flux right now. So she has to walk a line between these two things. Lisa came from Art Center, she had a strong formal background, was a highly skilled designer, had worked at two big design studios and had done a lot of commercial work. So someone like Lisa doesn't need to come to graduate school and learn how to make brochures, she already knows how to do that. Her real interest was finding out more about the history of design

and how she fits into that. In addition, she wanted to find out how she could become more present in her work. At Yale she was given the time and the space to do this. She started doing work about design that was produced by and for women at the turn of the century. There was a tremendous body of graphic design work produced to support the Suffrage movement, created by actual collaborative groups of women, that you never see in conventional graphic design histories. She was curious about that. At the same time, she was also working on an essay on the Women's Action Coalition in New York, and their use of graphic design as a vehicle to disseminate information on politics, ideas. She was comparing those two women's groups, doing quite a bit of research and writing on those two subjects. Then she started questioning how this kind of dialogue, which came out of these two groups, could be continued using contemporary technologies. By using the Internet, she tried to experiment and see how she could both communicate an idea and create an audience, and she was tremendously successful. For me that very clearly relates to graphic design, although some people have a hard time with that. **Is that a hard time with that?**

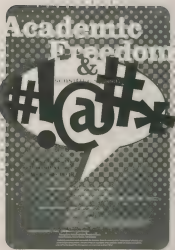
Wah. Yes, Paul Rand. For instance, said "Social issues are not design issues. They're two separate things."

Wah. Well I don't think that statement applies in this case. But in a way I do feel, the politics, and environmental issues have been overrepresented in the last few years. Again, I think we got back to the confusion between talking about the political implications of design and the political implications of things in general. The problem is that it was really easy at the late '80s and early '90s to talk about design this way, then design was supposed to be more about social issues and everyone sort of got all proactive, but I think for the main part that that was a passing, that was just a way for designers to feel good about what they were doing.

Wah. In the interview with Sheila de Bretteville in *Eye* magazine, it was explained how she wants to move design to proactive practice instead of focusing on corporate service, she wants designers to be active people, not simply followers, not "passive economic servants" as Katherine McCoy describes them; she wants to open the students' eyes to more than simple aesthetic matters.

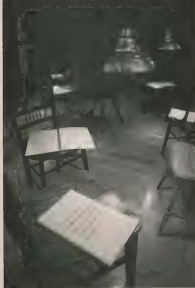
Wah. Right. But designers can be proactive without working outside of the design medium or adopting radical political positions. Thinking about material and resource use, audience, planned obsolescence, cultural identity, functionalism, are all ways for designers to be proactive in their work. It gets back to the issue of an overvaluation of the author. In the twenties, when you and I are a product of there seemed to be a dominant aesthetic position that was presented, although that was an illusion for the most part. That aesthetic position had a politics to it but everyone pretended that it didn't. The standardization popular in corporate work is inherently political. **Wah.** But it is also a choice you can make, right?

Wah. Sure, but it wasn't really presented as a choice in design education — it was presented that that was the way to design. There was design and there was everything else that wasn't design. And design basically meant that there was one aesthetic I appreciate Sheila's attitude concerning these issues and if you really try to understand what she is saying, you'll find that she is not grasping that designers go out and solve all the social ills in the world. It's more that she's saying that you don't necessarily have to work for a client. You can go out and see how design fits into other issues and how design can be used in ways that don't necessarily have to do with commerce. You can also work collaboratively with groups of people



Wahneema Lubiano, *Academic Freedom*, 1997. The University of Illinois at Chicago. Photo: David J. Phillips. Photo and Design: Wahneema Lubiano.

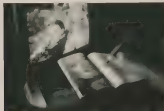
*The sign was by Michael and Alfred Lisa Johnson. It was the first sign to be made in the city, which was based on the first sign to be made in the city.



Source: CTIA, 2011. Installation view of David Goldberg's "The Bar Codes" at the Art Center.

an installation at New Heaven Artspace. The designers compiled oral histories from community women with AIDS. The monologues were transcribed in large books for the installation. In a darkened room, illuminated by hanging fixtures, a circle of diverse chairs invited visitors to sit together and read. As the room quieted, the women's voices became apparent, drifting out of speakers concealed in the light fixtures themselves.

[STEWART BOK, CTIA]



Source: David Goldberg. Art Center, 2011. Installation view of David Goldberg's "The Bar Codes" at the Art Center.

David worked extensively with the interconnected possibilities of video images and print. In his core book, he employed a bar code reader with which to access images, the bar codes embedded in appropriate points in the text. The thesis installation utilized an interactive terminal which drove a selection of video images on a large projection screen. David composed five essays included in his documentation books on the ability of the mass-produced image to encode human emotions

representing a number of shifts and fluidities. It is very difficult to criticize Sheila's ideology, because her concerns are humanistic, and I don't want to take anything away from that. But I still can't help but wonder whether it would be better for the students, who pay \$30,000 for an education, simply to focus on providing them with a solid knowledge of the basics of the craft of producing graphic design. And for graduate students, to provide them with even more specific skills, such as multi-media skills and programming. Don't you think that in the end, having the skills and the abilities to make something is still the most valuable asset for anybody entering the job market as a graphic designer?

Mason: Absolutely, but you have to do these two things together and you have to be critical of the professor. The problem is if you teach skills without any kind of broader understanding of what they're used for or what the meaning of "high quality" is, or what that word "quality" means, then you tend to go and advance a certain ideology without ever exposing that ideology. Again, that's one of the things that all of us were reacting to in that you can say words like "skill" and "craftsmanship" and "quality" in a very broad way. It's hard to argue with those things, but you also have to examine exactly what those words mean and how they have been used to advance certain ideological programs and how those ideological programs have imposed the way people see things. But aren't you simply replacing one political agenda with another?

Mason: We don't try to discourage people from working anywhere. Certainly our graduates go to work in a huge variety of environments in a way I believe Sheila has been widely attacked with this mono-ethic image of what she is advancing. You're right she is very humanistic and she wants people to be concerned and thoughtful about their activity, but the design's necessarily promote any one particular kind of issue over another. That being said, Sheila personally is very strongly committed to her convictions and her commitment is very attractive. I agree. How important do you think it is for a design teacher to also work professionally, or at least have professional experience? Mason: It's very important. At Yale Sheila and I are the only two full-time people and we both work. We have probably to faculty members teaching at all different levels. Everybody who teaches here is also an active artist or designer representing some point in the spectrum from the corporate to the academic. That's really important because the project aspect of graduate school should be related to the professional and taught by people who are dealing with these issues everyday. Mason: What are some of the biggest frustrations you have to deal with as a teacher? Mason: For me, personally, it's a bit of a fractured kind of life right now, trying to balance all these things at once. And there's always frustrations with trying to keep ten or fifteen students busy and on track with interesting projects. I had never taught full-time before I came here, and I am divided by my teaching, my professional work and the time I spend writing. While I feel it's important that I do professional work, I am also compelled to do research and writing because, in general, design educators have not produced enough theoretical material for the profession. I hope. Do you think there exists a trend right now of a lot of young graduate design

students who are frustrated after going back into the "real world" and who find absolutely no place for the things they would like to do? And therefore they go back into teaching as an escape, and that there are actually fairly frustrated people who are now teaching others how to design?

Mason: I think that has always been true though, at least to a certain extent. And that's both interesting and maybe problem etc. When I was studying at RISD there were a lot of people who came from the handicapped community in Basel who were teaching. I had a feeling that the kind of things that they had learned to graduate school were difficult to apply in a pure sense in the real world. They would try to, but inherent and it just wasn't very popular. So maybe they ended up being pretty frustrated, but then went and taught it to other people, like me. And in a way you can use that criticism for Yale, Calarts or Cranbrook graduates. For years, Yale was the biggest producer of design educators because it was one of the only programs offering an MFA in design and their teachers forwarded pedagogues they learned from their teachers. There's been a number of government teachers who've graduated from Cranbrook more recently. I think there is a certain aspect of the aesthetic that is very difficult to sell in the mainstream commercial design studio and maybe that drove some of them into teaching. I see work that is inspired by that pedagogy coming out of lots of different schools, such as North Carolina State, Calarts, Merrimack School of Art.

Mason: The fact that more talented young designers and up teaching instead of concentrating on applying their ideas in the commercial world, isn't that stifling the development of graphic design, though? Mason: I don't think so. I don't see it as a bad thing at all, and it's kind of inevitable. There's always been aspects of Academia that have been a little bit out of touch with the real world in all spheres of education. But that whole "those who can't do, teach" thing just doesn't hold up, in my experience. I have found some of the most interesting work produced now comes from people at Cranbrook's schools. Sheila, Kathy McGowan, Ted Felle, Jan van Toorn just to name a few. Just because the work you make in school doesn't exactly mirror the conventional market doesn't make it useless. In fact that's what keeps the profession moving forward. The professional, profit-driven world can never expend the time and effort necessary for pure experimentation.

What's what school is for? Mason: But isn't it simply unfair for teachers to want to teach things they themselves know are difficult to sell? Mason: You simply can't have an overly commercial view of what education should be about. Education, especially here in this country, at a college level, can't be reduced to purely preparing people for working in the studio because of the whole nature of what a bachelor's degree is - it's a liberal arts degree. The American college system is set up based on humanistic goals of the liberal arts education and that's true of all American colleges. It's a shared goal, although in the careerist of the rightists that ideal became clouded at some schools. And any thing that becomes too pre-professional is inherently outside of the American college system. It would be fine to set up a series of trade schools and I think you could teach people to become graphic design professionals. In a way, a school like Art Center is very focused on the industry and they have an equal amount of that. They produce people that are skilled craftsmen and designers ready to go to work. Then you have schools like Yale, Calarts and Cranbrook where the aesthetic that people are wanting isn't necessarily the one they will leave at Art Center, and the line between theory and practice is quite different. [end of last page]

nicholas rock's top five must read books

GRANTS OF DESIGN by Herbert Furtw
New York: Pantheon Books, 1965

MODERN TYPOGRAPHY: AN ESSAY IN CRITICAL HISTORY by John Gatty
London: Studio Vista, 1968

ADVERTISING THE AMERICAN DREAM: HULLING WAP FOR MODERNITY 1920-1940 by Richard Rabinowitz
Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980

TYPOGRAPHY ON DESIGN by Paul Rand
New York: Macmillan and Company, 1967

MAKING THE MODERN: DESIGN, ART AND DESIGN IN AMERICA by Jerry Scott
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980

enjoy is that how you would describe it, that they are learning an aesthetic? nicholas: Top school procedures an aesthetic, I am not saying that in a pejorative way at all. I could also say they learn a way of design, as a way of thinking about design. I see aesthetic is the political sense of that word, aesthetic as an underlying methodology or set of principles, that are manifested in form. I think that people will graduate to certain schools for these reasons: those differences, and there should be differences between schools and courses depend on the way we all teach design.

[END]

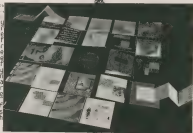
[STUDENT PROJECTS]

MAKING THE MODERN

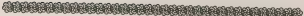
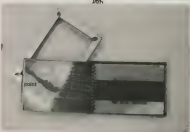
Project: Making the Modern

1980-1981

Ingrid worked exclusively with the integration of her own ethnicity and the aesthetic traditions of western culture. In her core project book she correlates a Taiwanese folktale and the story of the wizard of oz in a very large book that unfolds in a spiral and follows a specific journey. Her thesis project explores the nature of "made in Taiwan" as a phrase, as a self description, and Taiwan's uneasy courtship with western culture.



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EMILY ARLITAS

Emm: Tell us where you went to school and how you got involved with graphic design.

Arl: I got my undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I was interested in graphic design because it was something I thought I could do. I didn't think I was smart enough to do anything else.

Emm: Excuse me?

Arl: When I was growing up I wasn't thrown books to read, I was thrown a tennis racket. I grew up in a really athletic family, not as academically supportive one. So I

didn't grow up with the understanding that you had to study and if you did, you got smarter. I had no innate intellectual confidence. So I took a lot of art classes in school.

Emm: How did you find out about design?

Arl: I went to a university in Illinois for one year (1983-84) that had a small art and design department. I took art classes and a type class (hand-drawn lettering, layout) and I couldn't get enough of the type stuff. When I found out that I wasn't even that talented in the arts, but that graphic design was an option because there was more structure to it, more direction, and if I worked hard enough, I could actually get better, I didn't have to rely so much on a "God given talent." The funny thing about that program was that one of the two design educators there designed the Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket and that was a place to take.

Emm: Did that appeal to you?

Arl: No, not at all. But the thing was it was my freshman year and it was my first taste of design. My sophomore year I transferred to UIC on a tennis scholarship after finding out that they had a good design program. It wasn't until my junior year that I felt really committed. I wanted to eventually go to graduate school because I started to tap into something that made me realize that I didn't want to stop being a student. Then, in my senior year, I represented UIC at the STA Snow ACU student design conference. Several schools were asked to present work from their programs and Bob Simo from Calarts was one of the presenters. Actually I remember my mother taking me aside saying "Oh my god, that's really interesting stuff! Look into that school!" So I did. After I graduated I'd go to Europe, traveled around a bit and went to Holland for the ICGRADA conference where I met Lawrence Wild. I had been interested in what was happening at Cranbrook and met a lot of their graduates at the conference but when Lawrence talked about what was happening at

Calarts it seemed like the right place for me. I needed direction and Calarts could offer that.

When I came back from that trip I worked as an assistant graphic designer at a theater in Chicago. It was a good job for me at the time because it was laid back. There wasn't a lot of pressure and I was learning basic things about designing for a client, and about production and pricing.

I took a trip to Calarts, sat in on a crit and met Jeffrey Bandy and Ed Fella. I loved the school, the energy and the work, so I applied and was accepted.

Emm: So you had tried your hand at professional design for only one year and didn't find anything there, whereas Calarts, as a school of design, seemed like a more interesting environment?

Arl: Yeah.

Emm: What did you think Calarts would do for you that would make things easier when you graduated?

Arl: I went to Calarts to become a better graphic designer, although I didn't know exactly what that was. But I saw really interesting work coming out of the school and I was work that I wanted to be doing. What I was going to do once I graduated was a mystery, I could only see so far in front of me.

Emm: Did you ever consider Yale or RISD?

Arl: No. Never had you know, maybe that's because I wasn't seeing a lot of work out of schools like Yale or RISD. I wanted something completely different from my undergraduate education. Plus, I enjoyed meeting Lawrence and I listened when he talked about the energy that was happening at Calarts and that it was the "place to be" design. How did you land your teaching job at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago?

Arl: When I was in my second year, I sent my slides to Ed McDonald, who was working at SAIC in hopes of teaching a class. When I thought about graduate school, I knew that eventually I'd want to teach. The school hired me. I ended up teaching "Introduction to Visual Communication." Teaching at the time was perfect because I was home with my mother who was ill and I could be available to her and still stay connected to the design world. When a position opened for a full time tenured track, I wasn't even going to apply, I felt I had to do more professional work and I didn't think it was a realistic years that they would hire me. I was job at the time and had only taught one class, but they asked me to apply. It's a great way to interview for a job when you don't think that you have a chance in the world of getting it. They hired me.

Emm: Did you ever consider showing your portfolio around Chicago for design work?

Arl: I don't want to offend anybody but there wasn't anyone in Chicago that I wanted to work for, and I was quite frightened as the idea of going out and trying to make a living as my own as a professional graphic designer. I had a lot of bills to pay after graduate school and it seemed like such an incredible opportunity that I would teach three days a week and then work on the side on any kind of work I wanted. I figured it would allow me to do work with people who couldn't afford to pay me, while it returned they would allow me to be creative with projects. I remember calling Lawrence and he said, "Call, get ready. It's nothing like part-time." And I thought, "Yeah, yeah." But I didn't understand what he meant until now. Although I teach only three days a week, the commitment is so much greater.

Emm: Where does your drive and courage to teach come from?

Arl: I never thought about it as being courageous. I came out of graduate school and it sounds like a client, but I wanted to make a difference. I had all this energy about graphic design and for me, a new way of thinking about it. I was being asked to take that thinking and teach students. The department saw my work and knew that I was interested in making art students and saying to them, "Graphic design doesn't have to be about forgetting what you know as an artist, but taking what you know how to do and using it in the context of this applied art." SAIC has an interdisciplinary curriculum, meaning students can explore all departments throughout their education and there are no majors. But in the Visual Communication department we have a structured program so students can start in their freshman year and work through the entire program up into advanced design. We often have students who

THE DIVISION OF LABOR-
THE GENDERED
WORK PLACE

Institute

Judith Russi Kirshner
Judy Wittner
Victor Margolin
Ellen Lupton
Daniel Cheifetz
Akiko Busch

SAIC Auditorium (on Calumet Drive)
Wednesday April 13 @ 6:00pm

Division of Labor: Gendered Workplace
For tickets, go to the box office on Calumet Drive
also pass by the website

anne burdick

1

somizim

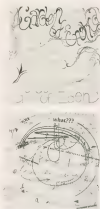
monday, september 13th
room 1113 champagne
12:30 noon

2

barbara glauert

3

* Film Submissions Accepted Through
The Festival, as well as the Bureau of Gender Information
Designed by Ed Fella



LOVE, INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS

THIS PAGE IS MEANT TO CLARIFY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TYPE DESIGNER AND A TYPESETTER. THE FIRST TYPESETTER AND TYPESETTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL, WAS A TYPESETTER. THE SECOND TYPESETTER AND TYPESETTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL, WAS A TYPESETTER. THE THIRD TYPESETTER AND TYPESETTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL, WAS A TYPESETTER.

Designers: Louise to print out
Printer: Robert Moore, Robert, Tony and Frank Brown



COLORED BRIDGEMAN TYPESETTER

THE DESIGN IS MEANT TO CLARIFY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TYPESETTER AND A TYPESETTER. THE FIRST TYPESETTER AND TYPESETTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL, WAS A TYPESETTER. THE SECOND TYPESETTER AND TYPESETTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL, WAS A TYPESETTER. THE THIRD TYPESETTER AND TYPESETTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL, WAS A TYPESETTER.

Phyllis Ann Day, Lynn Lichten, Michael Chavira, and Zee Shon



come into the program in their junior or senior year, but they've been exposed to some form of art and their works for them as designers in interesting ways. When I was a undergraduate school, I was taught a sense of my classes to think in a certain way. But no one told me why I had to think that way. I was taught what typefaces to use because that's what you used. My goal was to do what the teacher thought was right. Things have changed a lot. Now it's not to think and write, at least in our school, and I think that's a good thing. What do your students think design has to offer? What do they want out of it? Or do they have any ideas?

Oh, I think they do because one of the great things about the School is that we have a pretty strong training about ethics.

Classes regularly bring us in visiting practitioners so students have a chance to meet professional designers who share their work and role about their experiences. Most of the faculty, too, are practicing designers, as they bring their projects into the classroom. Although a lot of the projects that are given at the School a lot for self-improvement, there's also an effort put into teaching students what the real world is about. Teaching young people is quite a responsibility. They look up to you to learn a profession or to learn to show them the light. Does that weigh heavily on you? Do you ever wonder whether you teach them the right things?

Oh, when I first started teaching that weighed more heavily on me. I was like, it's so easy, because I did not see teaching as insecure. I don't know what I could offer. But I think that the classes I've taught have been appropriate for me. My introduction to Visual Communications and our beginning typography courses are comfortable because I have taught them several times and I have been really happy with the results. And then working with graduate students is the kind of stuff that I like because I am not far from the same experience. I would like to think that what I'm doing is turning people on to graphic design, and that what they leave my class, they are aware of what they've been able to do and they have a certain degree of confidence. They realize, like I did, that they have just begun to tap into something. What I like to do is tell them what's out there and where to go to get more. My idea. We now is, and has been a nice. I've been teaching the issue of postmodernism. I think the students are caught on to the fact that they have little professional experience or is that of no concern to them?

Oh, well, my colleagues at the School have been supportive of my struggle to merge the two worlds. My students see the work I do and it's about the conflicts and about the pleasure I get from doing the work I do and collaborating with clients who are working with me.

There are clients who are interested in less traditional forms of design. I also talk about how teaching allows me to form these types of working relationships. This question of my professional experience for lack thereof is a good one. Five months ago, I was talking to someone who asked "What are you doing teaching when you're not even going yet?" Good point. I want to teach and I want to make a difference for those students and I hope that I have. But it has been an ongoing battle figuring out how I can be a practitioner also. What am I bringing to the classroom? I can't have a

history behind me? If I could offer anything to anybody coming out of graduate school or going into graduate school, it is that professional experience is really important. Not on y does it give you the basic information about being in a studio, but you also develop confidence. I've recently come to the conclusion that I can't carry so much anxiety about the path I have taken. Professional experience is important but in my case, if I were to work in a design office producing annual reports, which seems like the big thing in Chicago, would that make me a better educator? I would have a little bit more experience with the corporate world but I would just be bringing in annual reports to show. That's not the type of work that interests me and I cannot pretend to be someone that I am not. Instead, I bring the students to offices that do that work. What I would like to do is graduate a lot of work for clients such as architects, artists and an argument one because that would allow me to apply the kind of thinking that interests me to those projects. And with that type of work, I can build confidence in my ability and continue to grow as a graphic designer.

The most important thing is that students understand that they have options in this field. Now they know to do it up to them. There are choices I have made and the work that I am interested in, it is really easy.

Also, I hope that my professional development continues while I teach and during the time away from teaching. This is just the path that my life happens to be taking and I have to have faith in my process. The more I work as a practitioner, the more information I can share with my students. But as long as I continue to come to teaching with the kind of energy that I have for it, I think I am bringing in something useful when I walk into the classroom.

What? When you say, as you did in one of your lectures in which, "Students are asked to do for interpretation, questions, formal and intellectual development and new methods of thinking" and then when you talk of what the real world of graphic design has to offer, are you setting yourself and your students up for major disappointments? Aren't you worried that the field of graphic design might not be able to accommodate all these ideas?

Oh, I just heard Robert Rietz say. He was in Chicago and in some momentous work from his office (Johnston McCarty) and from Cranbrook. He said it was really important that they make, so that type of thinking and form making, so when the time comes to use them're available. Once you like some programs that have too many doors for a complete four years who leave with a clear understanding of how the process works at the school in most cases, we don't have them for four years. So we try to nurture their enthusiasm, energy and desire, and to teach them formal and computer skills, but most importantly, needs to think.

Right. What we have someone here at the Chicago office, but and someone they would have to have a passion for design. Although that kind of goes without saying, doesn't it? There's no reason to hire someone who has no design, right? Then, what's really important to us is that this person should have solid skills of making design, right from the get go, because it's all likelihood, before anything, that's what we would want from this person. They should know the basics of design, drawing, structure, style, etc. But they should also have extensive computer skills.

Oh, those are the things we are teaching students. We have a pretty extensive computer lab. A lot of students come into the design program and start learning graphic design on the computer, although that, in me, is a bit of a problem. When we begin typography class they are not allowed on the computer so that they can learn typography in traditional ways. The reason I'm pretty adamant about that is because I have watched students



BY TALKING PAPER
Produced by GUY A. HILL

Roll Mikito's top five must read books

Ways of Seeing by John Berger

AL CONQUESTS ITALY: THE PICTURE OF STYLE IN CONTEMPORARY CLOTHING BY GUY A. HILL

CONCRETE PASSIONS: THE DREAMERS IN POPULAR CULTURE BY JIM MCKINLEY

50 YEARS OF GRAPHIC DESIGN: THE STORY OF THE DESIGN

GRAPHIC DESIGN IN AMERICA: A VISUAL LANGUAGE HISTORY

TYPOGRAPHY NOW: THE NEW WAY OF DESIGN

THE GRAPHIC DESIGN BY GUY A. HILL

BOOKS OF DESIGN BY GUY A. HILL

THEORY BOOK OF DESIGN AND DESIGN BY GUY A. HILL

great time to be a graphic designer, the most exciting time to be young and just starting out. And I think we need to hear more of that from established designers. I'm reading in so many places now that all this new work is wrong. People are saying work that's been done at the schools and placed in a context that it was never meant to be placed in. The people are not taking it as the young artists.

Well, regardless of whether the criticism is for or not, there remains the fact that the experiments are not being accepted by the public at large or, if at all, only in tiny pockets. So the public will never know what graphic design is, but hopefully our culture's visual vocabulary will continue to change. There needs to be an openness to the fact that there are many different audiences, many different approaches to visual communication and there should be more acceptance and support of these differences. The criticism bores me. The experimentation, whether visual or theoretical, is interesting because it calls for change and if we don't feel for change and continue to do what has been done then what are we doing?

Later in the interview you mentioned that you chose to do design instead of art because design seemed to be more structured. Yet your own personal work is probably much closer to fine art. Have you ever considered going back to studying and doing fine art and forgetting about the narrow confines of the graphic design profession?

Yes. After Calarts I learned that graphic design does not have to be so narrow. I can define this profession so to fit my needs. And one of the best is of training is that it allows me to do my own personal work. You know, a year after my mother said the great day for me I did a poster for myself to help produce my own art and after I finished, I realized that I knew a lot of people who had lost a parent. So I had the poster printed and sent about 50 of them out and have since given many away. My audience was specific. It was for people who had lost because that was the people who I felt understood. And in the last four years I've produced three holiday books (about one hundred copies) and I've sent them to friends (a lot of designers) and family. Those books have become very important to me because I speak to it with an audience that I choose and I find that the benefits (for me) are far greater than any "professional" type of work. I am making myself the client and finding my own audience. No money, but the feedback has been positive and I love to commentate that way. I talk about things that people don't talk about. I don't think that my work is "experimental" especially in design regards to form. But I am taking what interests me, form-making, and putting it into a context that is not as much new design interests me because of the power and for change in thinking.

So although the idea of going back to school is appealing, I am more interested in building a business in my new studio and expanding my own practice, continuing to teach and giving better at it, doing my own work on the side and most importantly staying my development. That is the beauty of it all. It is in the process, not the product.

(GUY)

also have a number of art students going through our classrooms, hopefully typography and issues of design and form helps to mark in their artwork. They may never end up in a design studio, yet they have an understanding of how to communicate through type and image design. You ask a good question in your letter to me, You wonder,

"How can the work that comes from Calarts and Cranbrook be taken seriously in the context of our profession and not pushed aside as experimental ballistics?" What do you think?

Yes. I don't have the answer to that. But I do love to have more of a dialog about it. There's a tremendous amount of fear about this experimental work, which is a shame. April Greener came to the School in October and she gave a talk at the American Center for Design. She said that it was unfortunate that there wasn't a wider acceptance of what was happening in design right now. As far as she was concerned, this is a

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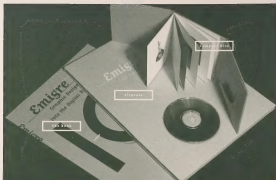
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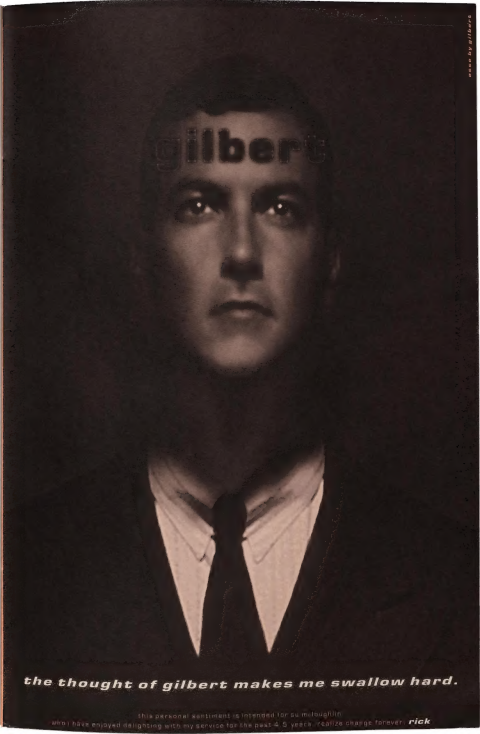
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